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Stan Lee PRESENTS:

MASTER OF KUNG FU



"THE AFTER-
NOON IS
DARK."

"IT RAINS."

"AND SIR DENIS
HAYLAND SMITH'S
STORMHAVEN
CASTLE IN
ENGLAND IS
CLEANSED IN THE
DOWNPOUR."

DOUG MOENCH
SCRIPT / PLOT

GENE PAY
PENCILS / PLOT

JACK ABEL
INKER

JIM NOVAK
LETTERER

RALPH MACCHIO
JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

C. SCHEELE
COLORIST

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"BUT HERE INSIDE, WHERE IT IS WARM AND DRY, LEIKO AND I ARE CLEANSED ONLY BY THE FLUID OF OUR EXERTIONS..."

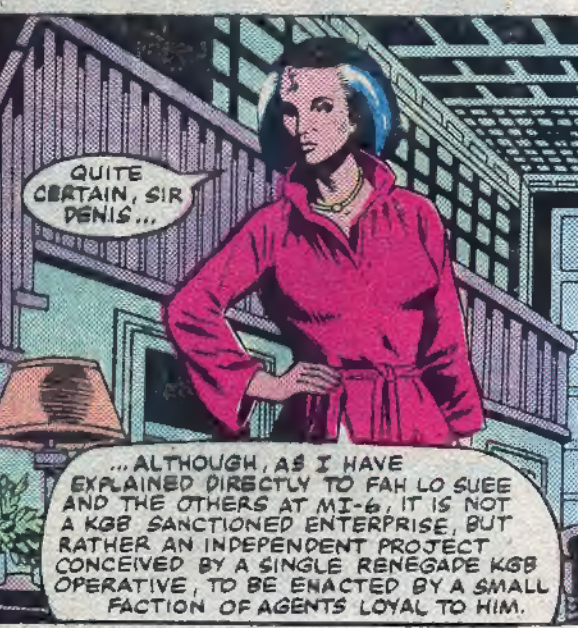
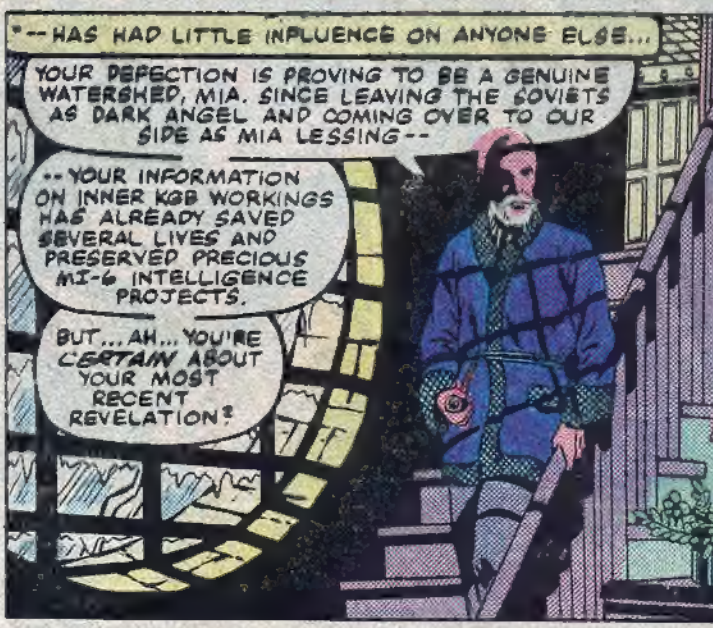
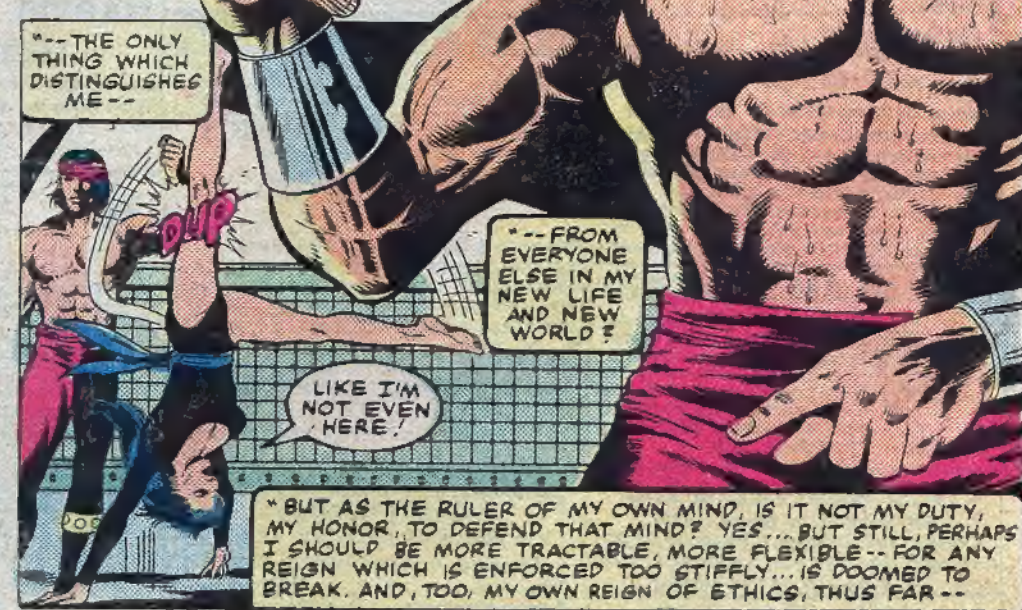
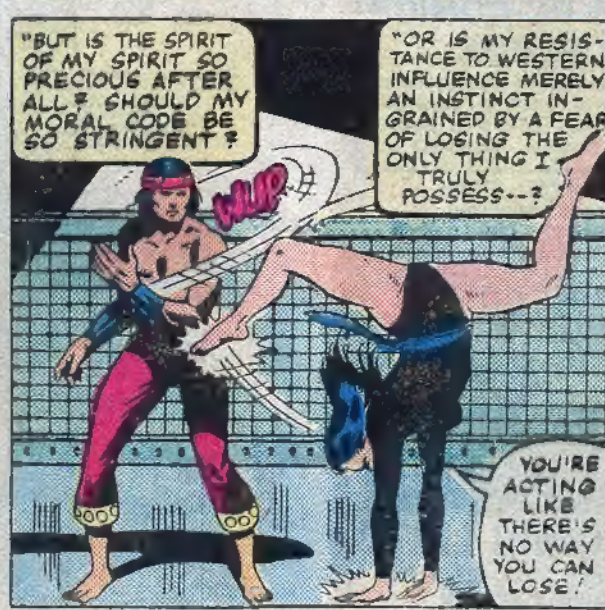
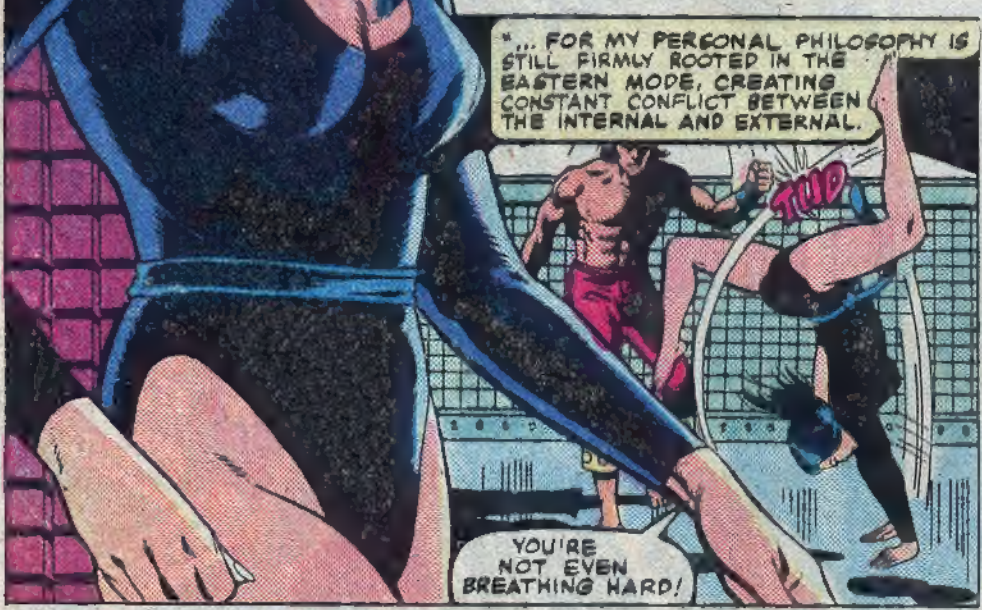
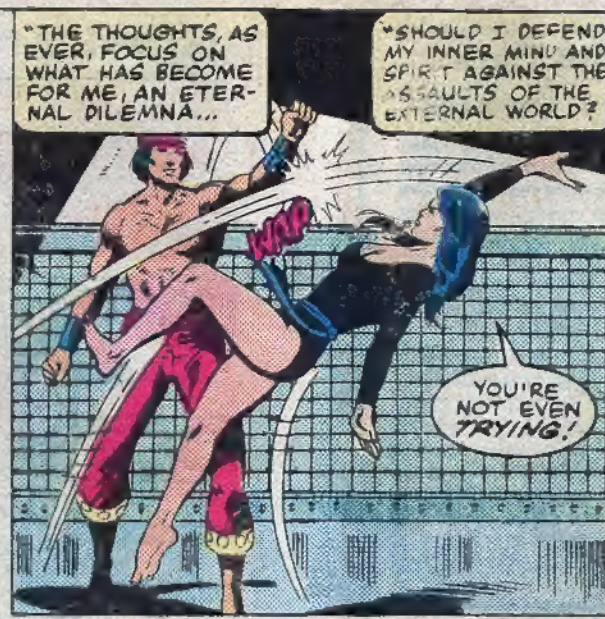
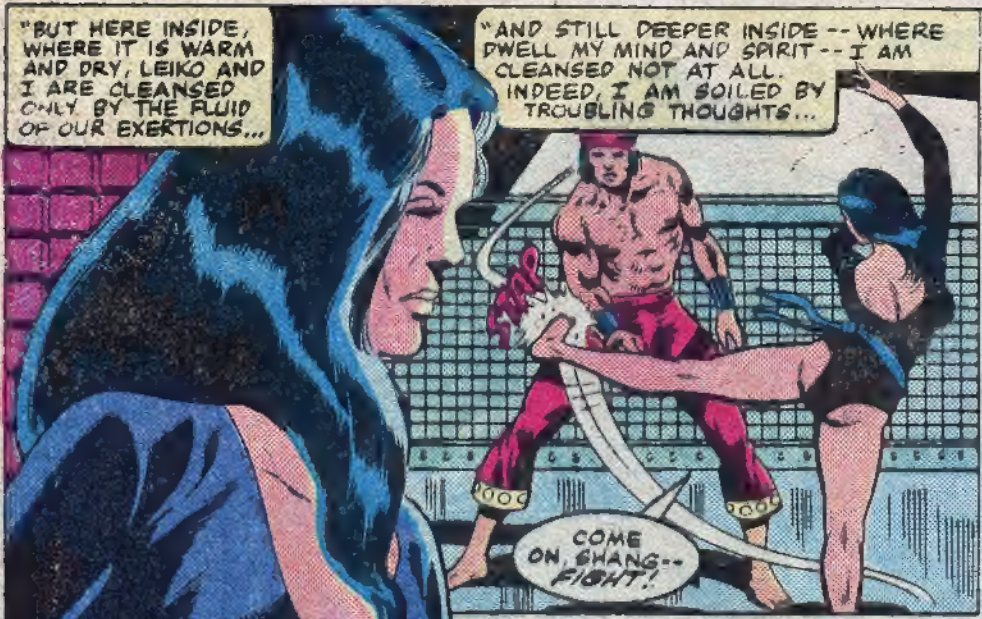
"AND STILL DEEPER INSIDE -- WHERE DWELL MY MIND AND SPIRIT -- I AM CLEANSED NOT AT ALL. INDEED, I AM SOILED BY TROUBLING THOUGHTS..."

"THE THOUGHTS, AS EVER, FOCUS ON WHAT HAS BECOME FOR ME, AN ETERNAL DILEMMA..."

"SHOULD I DEFEND MY INNER MIND AND SPIRIT AGAINST THE ASSAULTS OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD?"

"THOUGH CHINESE BY BIRTH AND TRAINING, I AM NOW A CREATURE OF THE WESTERN WORLD."

"THIS IS DIFFICULT TO BEAR IN MIND..."



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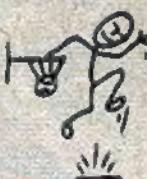
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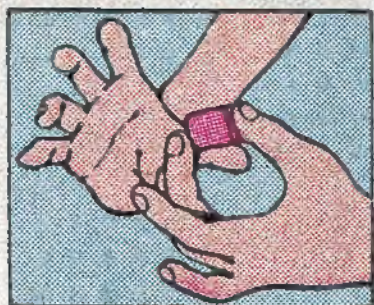
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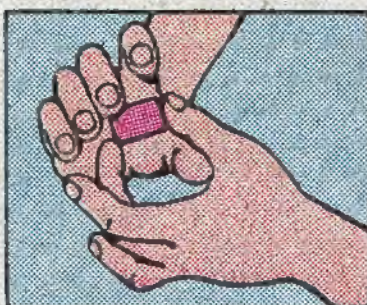
The magic in gum is Bubble Yum.



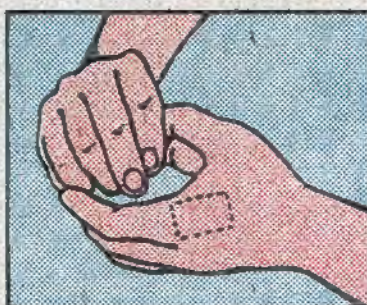
Try this magic trick with your next piece.



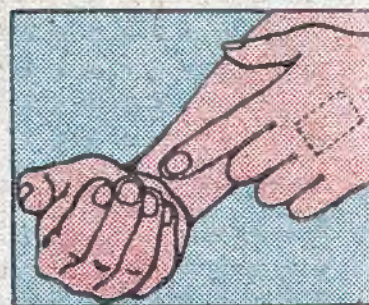
Hold the Bubble Yum between the thumb and middle finger of your left hand.



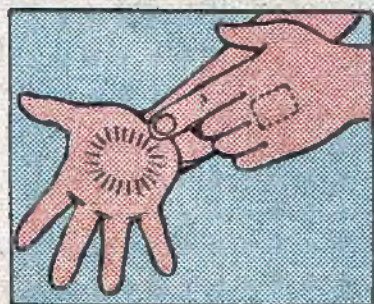
Pretend to grab it with your right hand while you really drop it into the palm of your left hand.



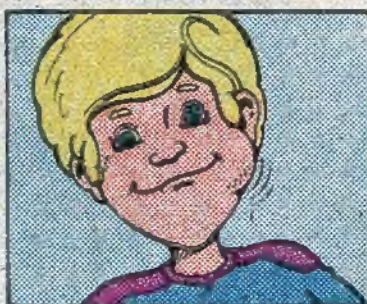
Keep the fingers of your right hand loose as if they had the gum.



Point with the left hand while you secretly hold the gum in your palm.



Say "Presto chango!" and open your right hand to show that the Bubble Yum has magically disappeared.



Then you can make the Bubble Yum disappear the easy way—and try the number one taste.



AND MY ANSWER REMAINS THE SAME, CLIVE-- HE MOST ASSUREDLY IS.

HIS REAL NAME IS GRIGORI SOVCHENKO. BACK WHEN RELATIONS WERE NOT SO TENSE BETWEEN THE TWO BORDERING SUPERPOWERS RUSSIA AND CHINA, THERE WERE CERTAIN LIMITED "EXCHANGE PROGRAMS"...

TWO OF CHINA'S MOST ACCOMPLISHED MARTIAL ARTISTS-- MASTERS OF THE ESOTERIC FIGHTING STYLE KNOWN AS "NAKED KILL"--WERE BROUGHT TO RUSSIA TO TEACH AND TRAIN A HAND-PICKED YOUTH.

SINCE YOUNG GRIGORI WAS PART MONGOL, FROM THE RUSSIAN STEPPES, AND SINCE HIS FATHER WAS A HIGH-RANKING BUREAUCRAT IN THE KGB INFRASTRUCTURE, HE WAS CHOSEN.

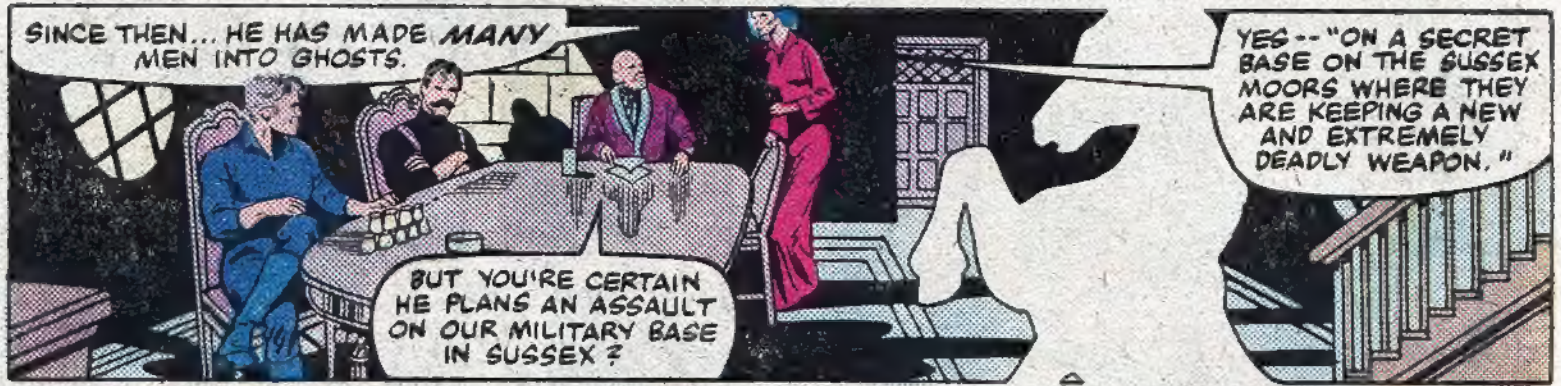
HIS TRAINING OCCUPIED FIFTEEN YEARS, AT WHICH TIME THE TWO CHINESE WERE CALLED HOME--AND AT WHICH TIME GRIGORI WAS ALREADY THE SINGLE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN SOVIET RUSSIA.

HE CONTINUED TRAINING ON HIS OWN, REFINING AND ADDING TO THE ESOTERIC STYLE WITH TECHNIQUES AND TRICKS OF HIS OWN.

WHEN HE JUDGED HIMSELF TO BE TRULY READY AND HAD PASSED HIS OWN SELF-APPOINTED BAPTISM... THE UNDETECTED SLAYING OF TEN TOP WESTERN SPIES WITH HIS BARE HANDS -- HE ASSUMED A NEW NAME...

"THAT NAME TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH AS BEST I CAN, WOULD BE... LET ME SEE... *THE GHOST MAKER.*"





SINCE THEN... HE HAS MADE *MANY* MEN INTO GHOSTS.

BUT YOU'RE CERTAIN HE PLANS AN ASSAULT ON OUR MILITARY BASE IN SUSSEX?

YES -- "ON A SECRET BASE ON THE SUSSEX MOORS WHERE THEY ARE KEEPING A NEW AND EXTREMELY DEADLY WEAPON."



THOSE WERE THE EXACT WORDS I OVERHEARD HIM SPEAK -- AND HE PLANS HIS RAID FOR TUESDAY NEXT.

HMM... THEN PERHAPS OUR FREELANCE RESTORATIONS" ORGANIZATION SHOULD LEND MI-6 A HAND IN PREPARING FOR THE ASSAULT. THANK YOU, MIA.

COME ON, ANGEL -- LET'S GO FIND SOMETHING TO DO FOR A RAINY DAY.



YOU REALIZE, BLACK JACK, THAT THIS GHOST MAKER IS AFTER THE WEAPON I TOLD YOU ABOUT?

AYE, SIR DENIS, THE ONE OUR BOYS DEVELOPED FOR NOTHIN' -- SINCE WE'VE DECIDED IT'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR ANY POSSIBLE USE.



YES, PARLIAMENT HAD A DONNYBROOK ON ITS HANDS WITH THE MILITARY CHAPS OVER *THAT* DECISION, BUT IT *IS* TOO DEADLY FOR USE... AND IT'S BEING STORED ON THE BASE UNTIL A MEANS OF DISPOSAL CAN BE FOUND.

PERHAPS YOU SHOULD MOTOR DOWN THERE TODAY -- TAKE AN ADVANCE LOOK AT THE PLACE, SCOUT FOR POTENTIAL WEAK POINTS AND PLANS OF DEFENSE.



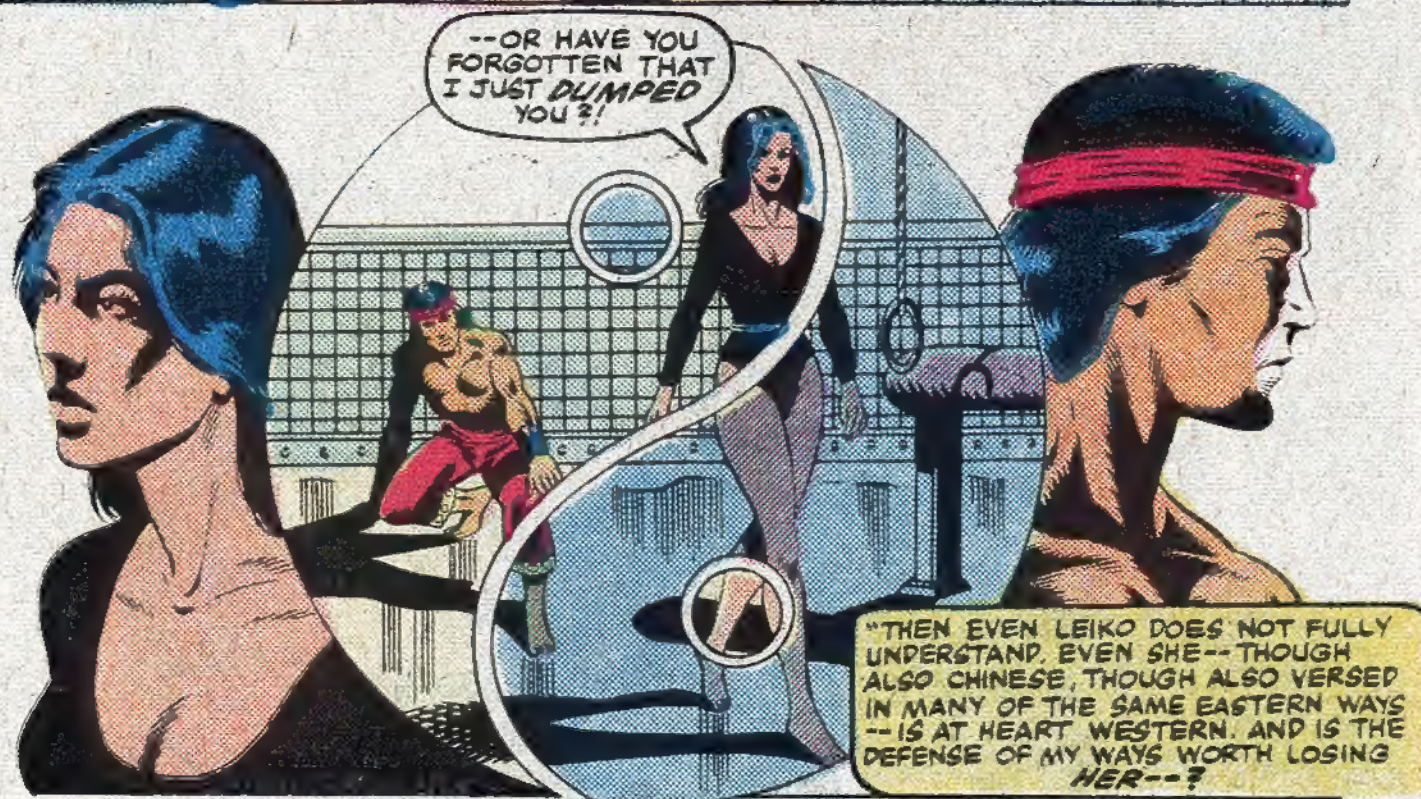
TAKE RESTON AND--

NO, BEST TO LET THE NEW LOVERS BE, SIR DENIS. I'LL TAKE THE CHINAMAN AN' WU.

...AND THEN I'M GOING TO PUT ON THE NEW PERFUME YOU LIKE...

AND, ANGEL--?

...AND LET YOU CHASE ME. BUT DON'T WORRY -- IF YOU CATCH ME, I WON'T FIGHT.



OUT OF MY WAY, MIS-TER TARR.

HEY! WHAT'S EATIN' YOU, YA BLOODY VIXEN?

PRIDE.

HMPH.



BEEN BEATIN' UP ON YER GIRLFRIEND AGAIN, CHINA-MAN? AH WELL, IT'S STILL A TERRIFIC DAY FOR A DRIVE TO SUSSEX.

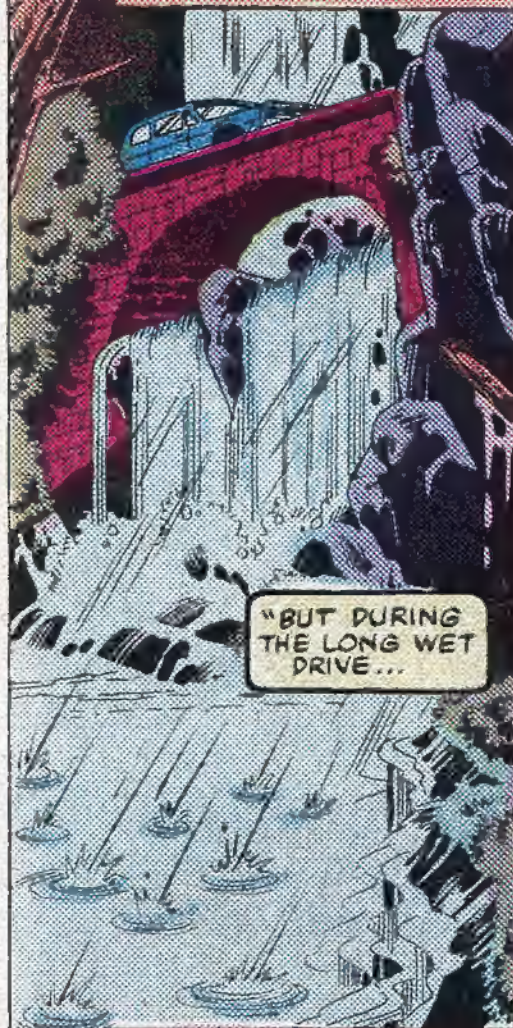


THAT'S JUST WHAT I MEAN. I'LL FETCH THE WU VIXEN--IF SHE AIN'T EXPLODED YET--AND MEET YA BY THE CAR.

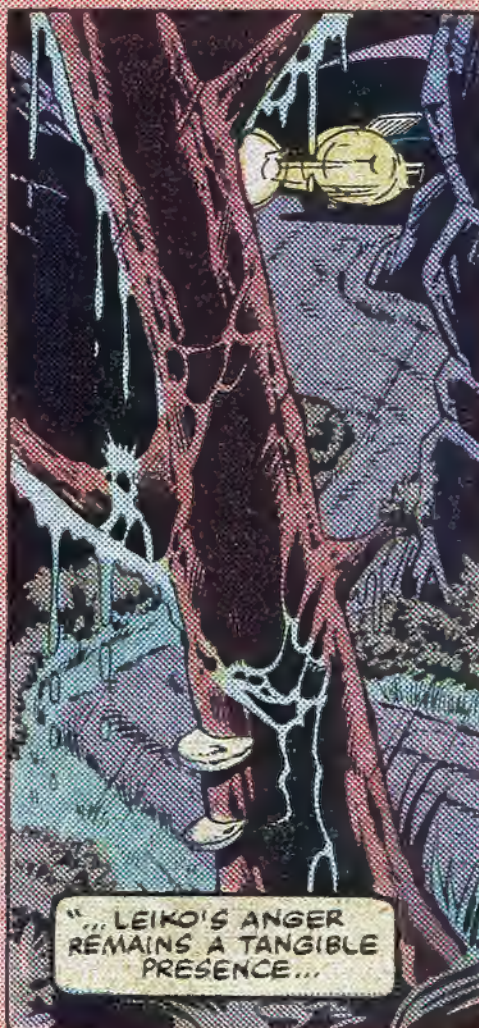
IT'S RAINING.



"WHY NOT? THINKING HAS GOTTEN ME NOWHERE; PERHAPS THE CAR WILL...AND PERHAPS THE RAIN WILL SOFTEN LEIKO.



"BUT DURING THE LONG WET DRIVE...



"...LEIKO'S ANGER REMAINS A TANGIBLE PRESENCE..."

"...THOUGH SHE SPEAKS NOT A WORD FROM HER POSITION IN THE REAR SEAT.

THAT'S WHAT I LIKE--HAPPY-GO-LUCKY CONGENIAL PASSENGERS TO KEEP ME COMPANY.

PRIVATE
TRESPASSERS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED



"BLACK JACK TARR DRIVES ON FOR HOURS THROUGH THE SOFT STORM.

"AND FINALLY, THE NEXT VOICE IS ALSO TARR'S..."



THERE IT IS...THOSE LIGHTS UP AHEAD...

"THE SUSSEX
MILITARY BASE
--OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS OUR
DESTINATION,
AND CODE-
NAMED 'DRA-
GONFLY
SPIRE,' CUTS,
SH, WU?"

"LIPS COMPRESSED,
LEIKO SAYS NOTHING.

"OH, YEAH, I FORGOT-- YOU'RE STILL DOIN'
YER WOUNDED CLAM IMITATION. ANYWAYS,
THE JOINT USED TO BE CALLED *LIMEKILN
MANOR* -- DEEDED TO HER MAJESTY BY
DISINTERESTED HEIRS AFTER THE SECOND
WAR..."

"CAN YA IMAGINE
GIVIN' AWAY A
PILE O' ROCKS LIKE
THAT? I'D
SOONER SWALLOW
A BLOODY SNAKE
TAIL- FIRST.

"AH WELL,
THERE'S OUR
GREETIN'
PARTY-- TIME
TA GET
SOAKED."

NICE DAY, HUH? I TAKE IT YOU'RE
JEAKINS -- THE COMMANDER
OF THIS LITTLE SET-UP?

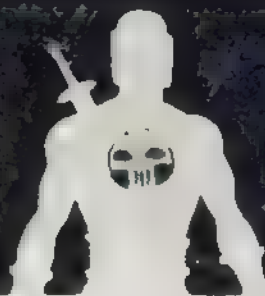
THAT'S RIGHT -- AND
YOU MUST BE
BLACK JACK TARR,
SHANG-CHI, AND
LEIKO-WU.

NAYLAND SMITH
RANG US UP
ABOUT YOUR
COMING.

WELCOME TO DRAGON-
FLY SPIRE -- BUT I WARN
YOU, TARR, I PLACE VERY
LITTLE STOCK IN THE
RUMORED ASSAULT...

"THIS GHOST MAKER CHAP
WOULD HAVE TO BE A RAVING
LUNATIC TO TRY ANY FUNNY
BUSINESS HERE...

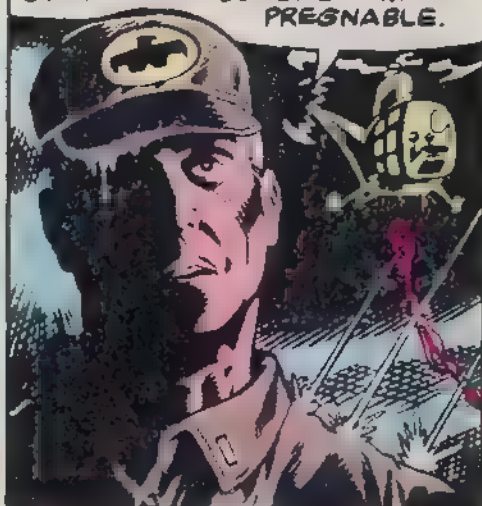
(NOW.)



WE'RE KEEPING THE WEAPON IN
THE SPIRE, OF COURSE, AT THE
VERY TOP-- WHERE
A SINGLE WELL-
EQUIPPED MAN
COULD HOLD OFF
AN ARMY IF
NEED BE.



BUT OF COURSE THAT WON'T
BE NECESSARY EVEN IF THERE
IS AN ATTACK. THE BASE IS
COMPLETELY SECURE--IM-
PREGNABLE.



NO ONE COULD
POSSIBLY--



(NOW.)

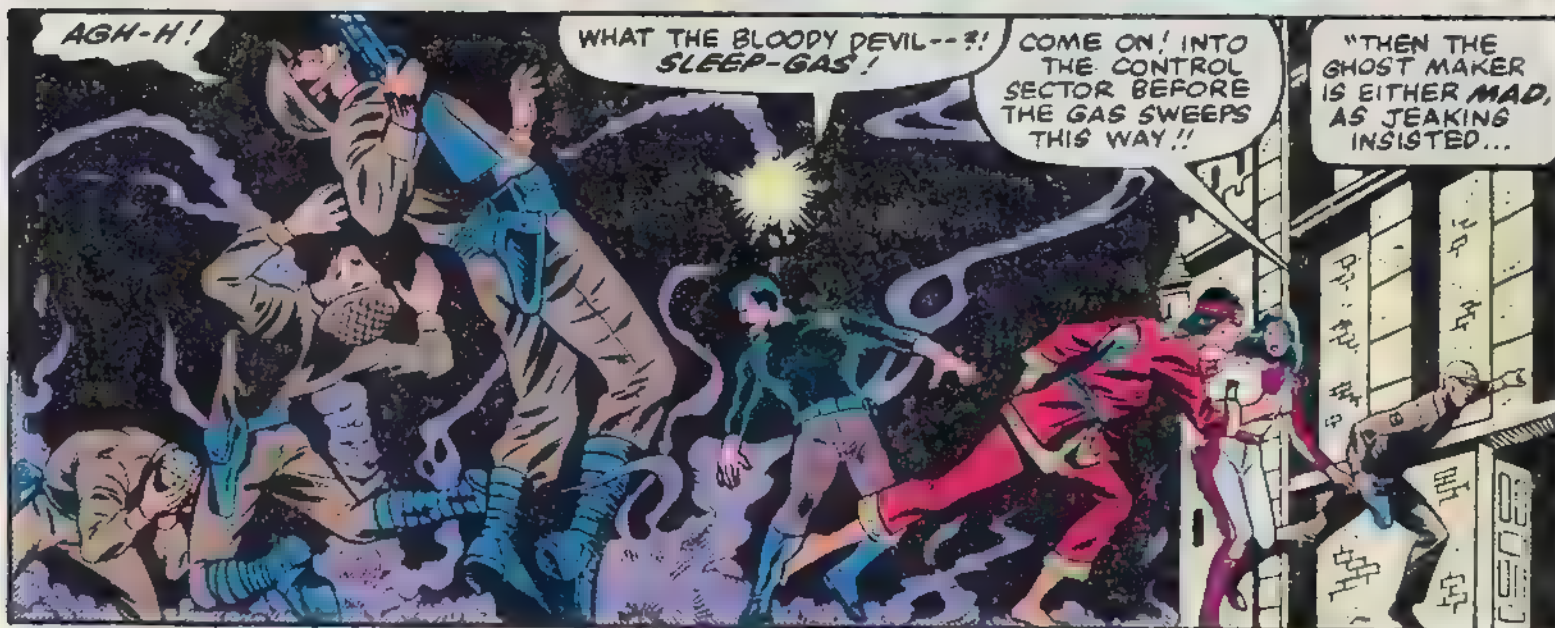


AGH-H!

WHAT THE BLOODY DEVIL--?!
SLEEP-GAS!

COME ON! INTO
THE CONTROL
SECTOR BEFORE
THE GAS SWEEPS
THIS WAY!!

"THEN THE
GHOST MAKER
IS EITHER MAD,
AS JEAKING
INSISTED...



"-- OR
SUPREMELY
CONFIDENT,
AS I FEAR.

(NOW.)



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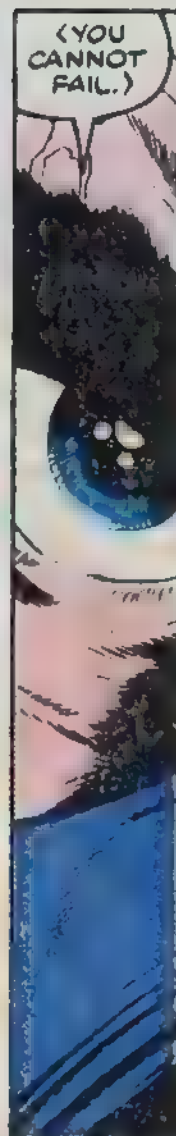
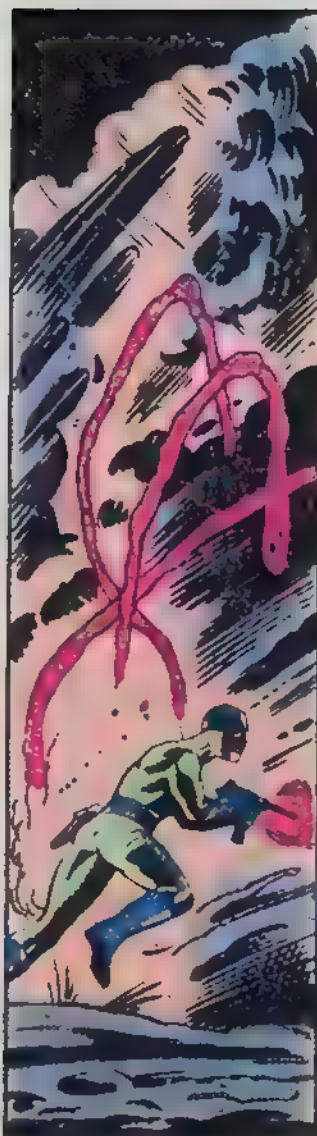
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(YOU
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MAKER.)



(YOU
CANNOT
FAIL.)



THE GHOST MAKER
MUST'VE KNOWN OF
DARK ANGEL'S DEFECTION -- SUSPECTED SHE
KNEW OF HIS PLANS
AND MOVED THE ASSAULT
DATE A WEEK EARLY!

BLAST HIS
HIDE!

HURRY!



POK POK

SPANG
CHNEW



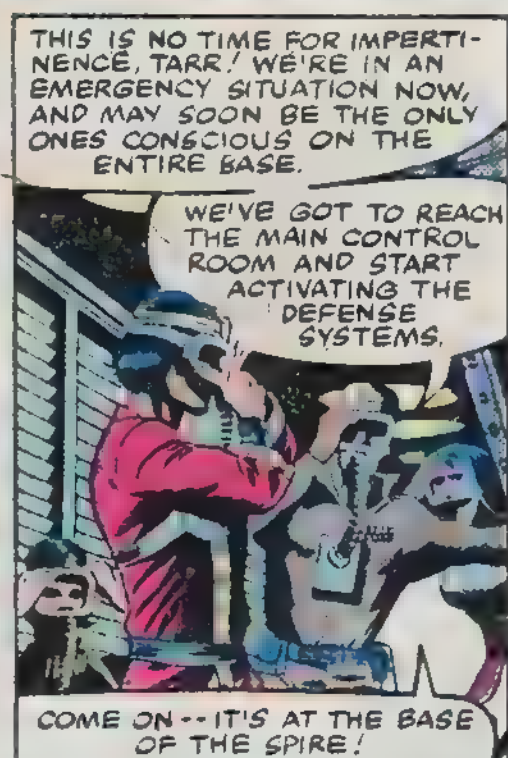
THERE IS AN ENTIRE TEAM OF
THEM -- WEARING MASKS!

WITH
AIR-FILTERS
IN THEM, NO
DOUBT!



THE WORKERS ARE DOWN TOO
-- MUST'VE PUMPED GAS INTO
THE AIR SYSTEM, BUT IT'S
CLEARING NOW. CONFOUND IT,
WHY ISN'T THERE A GAS MASK
AT EVERY
DESK?!

PERHAPS
BECAUSE YER
SECURITY AIN'T
QUITE SO SECURE,
JEAKINS!



THIS IS NO TIME FOR IMPERTINENCE, TARR! WE'RE IN AN
EMERGENCY SITUATION NOW,
AND MAY SOON BE THE ONLY
ONES CONSCIOUS ON THE
ENTIRE BASE.

WE'VE GOT TO REACH
THE MAIN CONTROL
ROOM AND START
ACTIVATING THE
DEFENSE
SYSTEMS.

COME ON -- IT'S AT THE BASE
OF THE SPIRE!

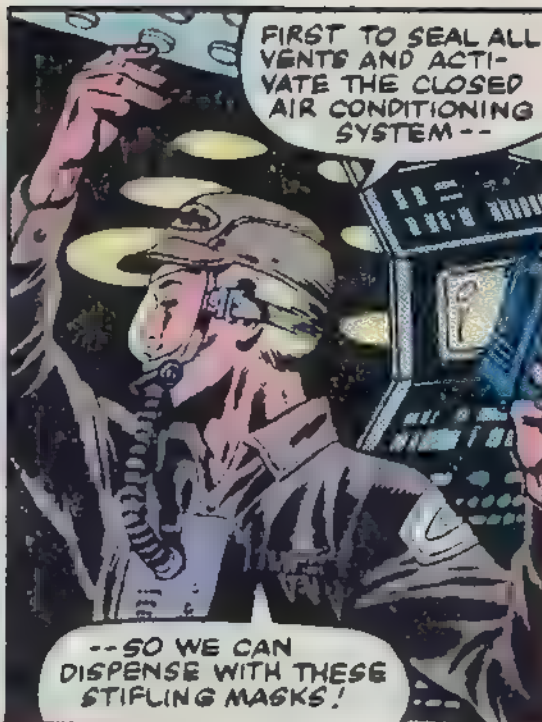
"WE RUN DOWN LONG CORRIDORS UNTIL WE REACH A LOCK OF THREE DOORS..."

EVEN IN HERE-- AT THE VERY CORE OF THE SPIRE!



FIRST TO SEAL ALL VENTS AND ACTIVATE THE CLOSED AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM --

--SO WE CAN DISPENSE WITH THESE STIFLING MASKS!



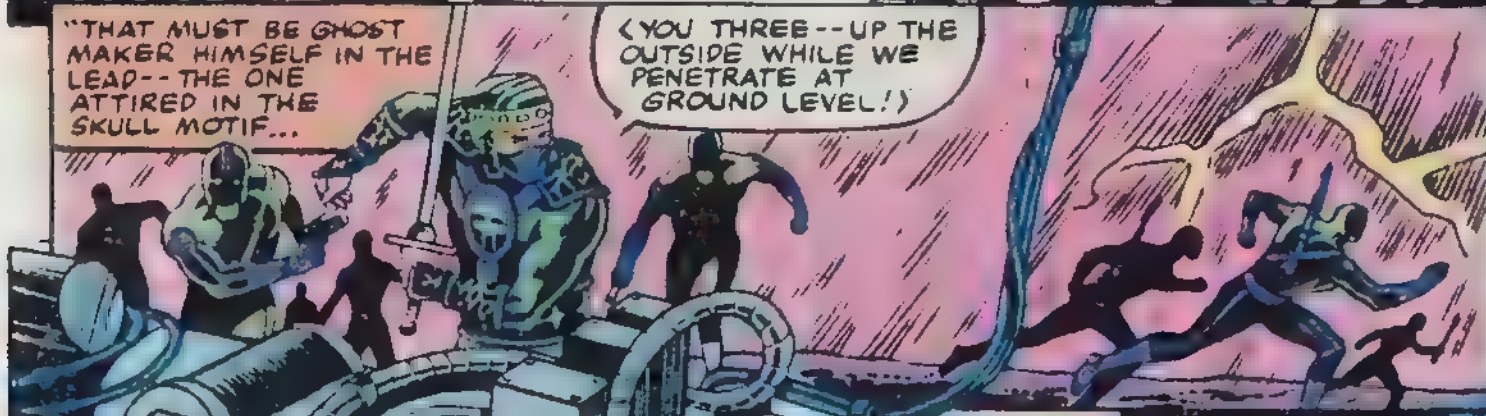
AND NOW TO ACTIVATE OUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE...

WATCH THE MONITORS, MR. TARR, AND YOU'LL SEE THAT EVEN IN A WORST-CASE SITUATION, OUR DEFENSES ARE MORE THAN ADEQUATE.



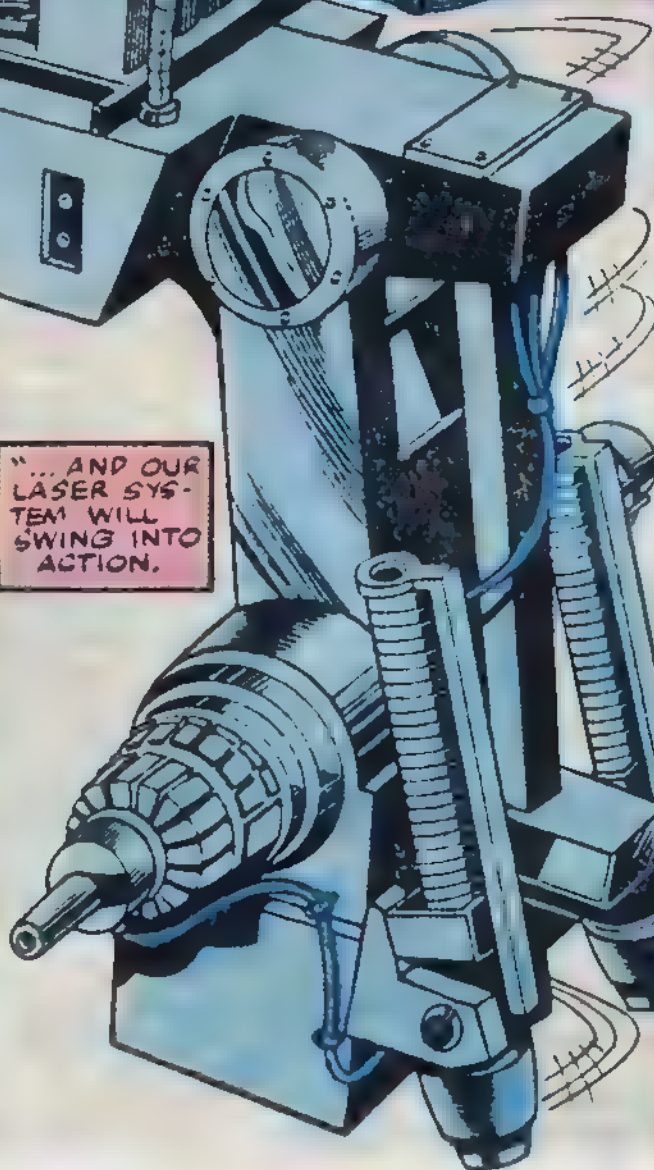
"THAT MUST BE GHOST MAKER HIMSELF IN THE LEAD-- THE ONE ATTIRED IN THE SKULL MOTIF..."

(YOU THREE--UP THE OUTSIDE WHILE WE PENETRATE AT GROUND LEVEL!)

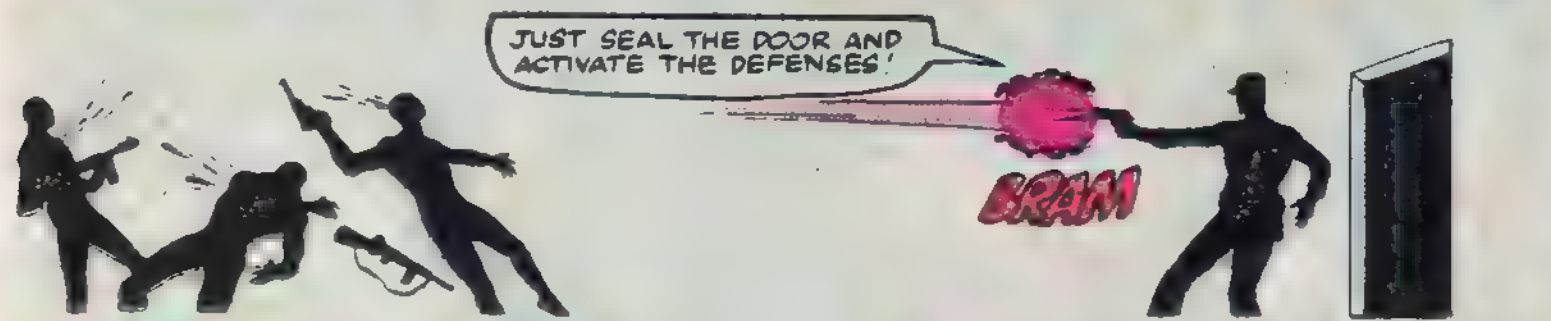
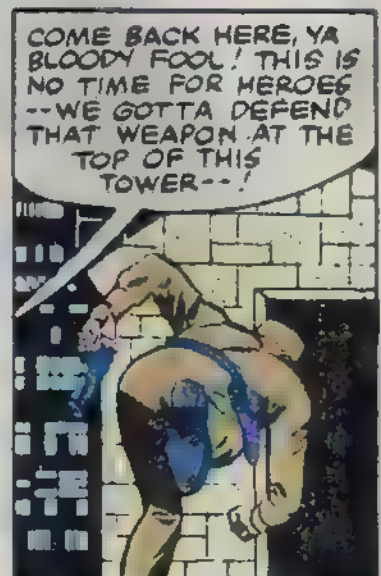
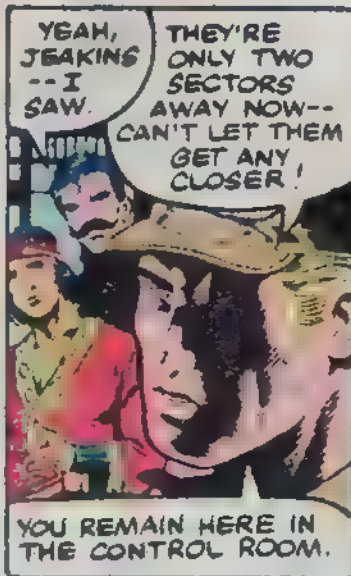
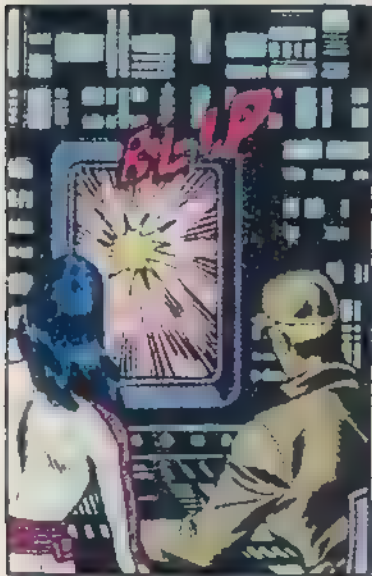
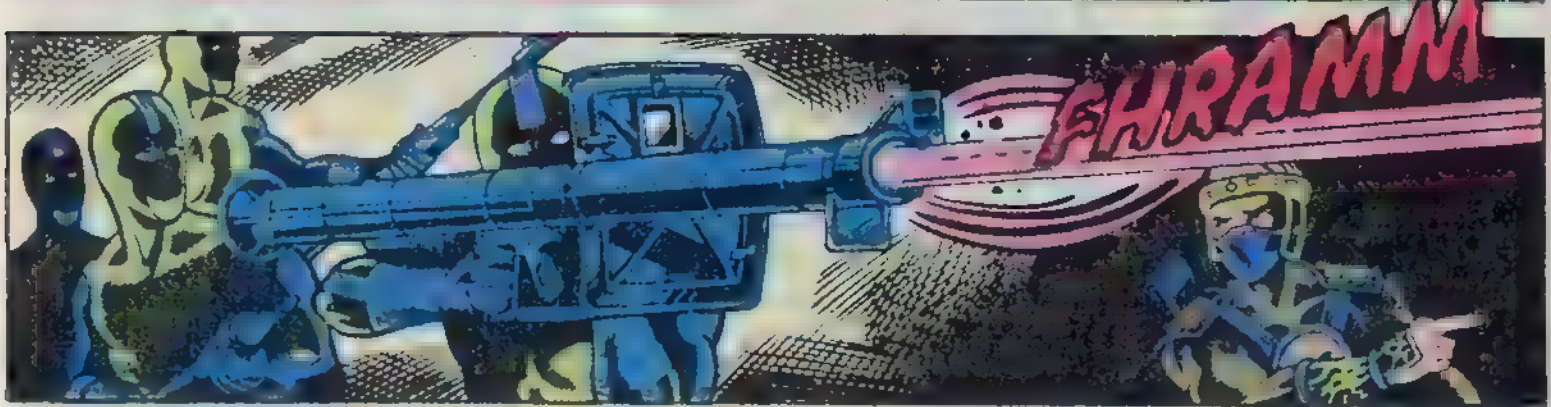
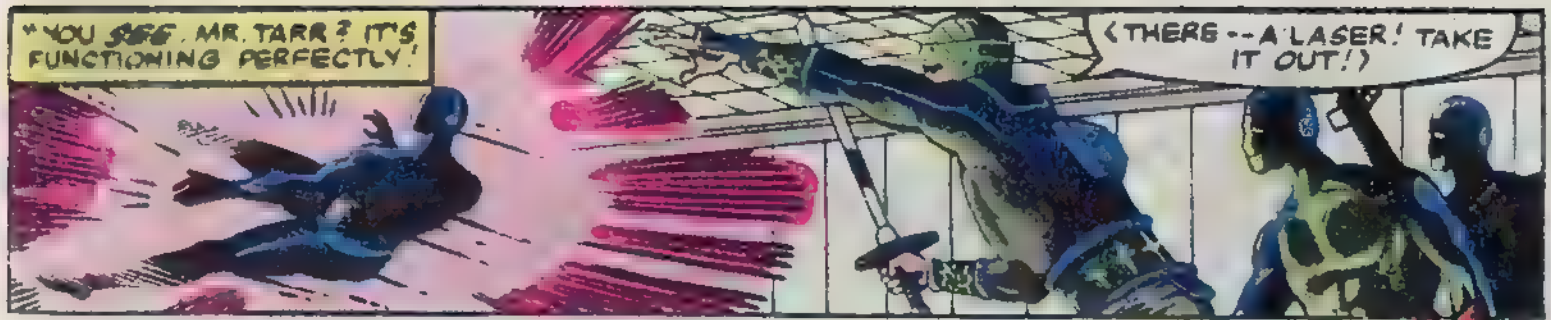


"THEY'VE BREACHED THE MAIN CORRIDOR --MEANING THAT IN TEN MORE STEPS THEY'LL TRIGGER THE SENSORS..."

"... AND OUR LASER SYSTEM WILL SWING INTO ACTION.

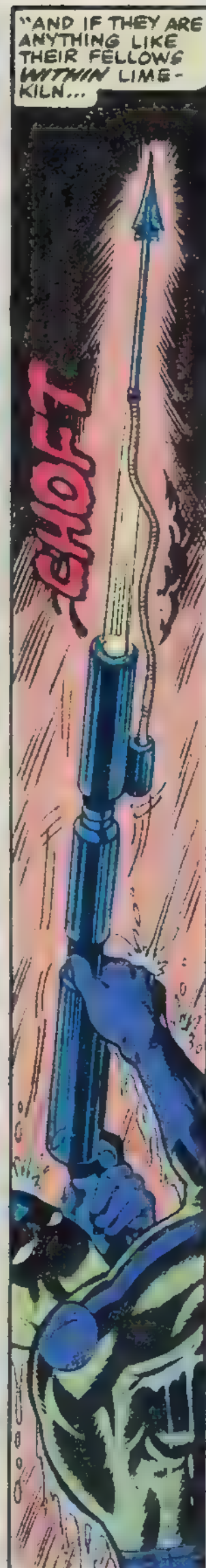
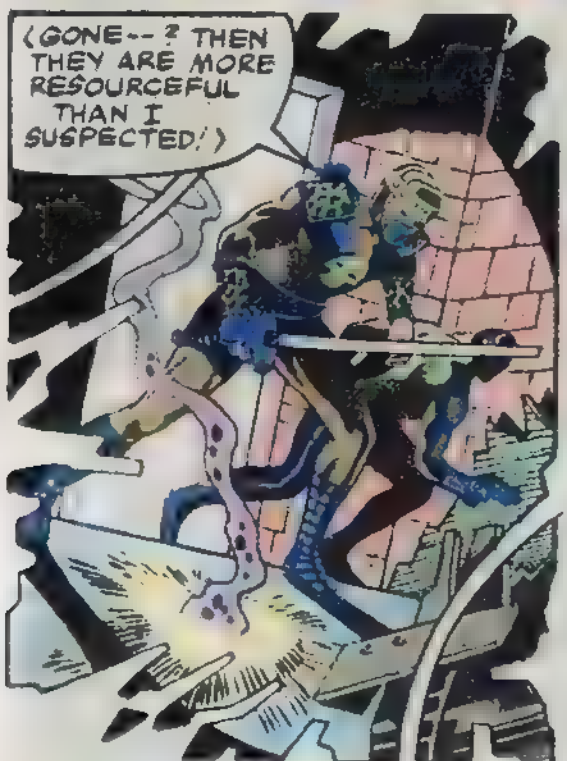
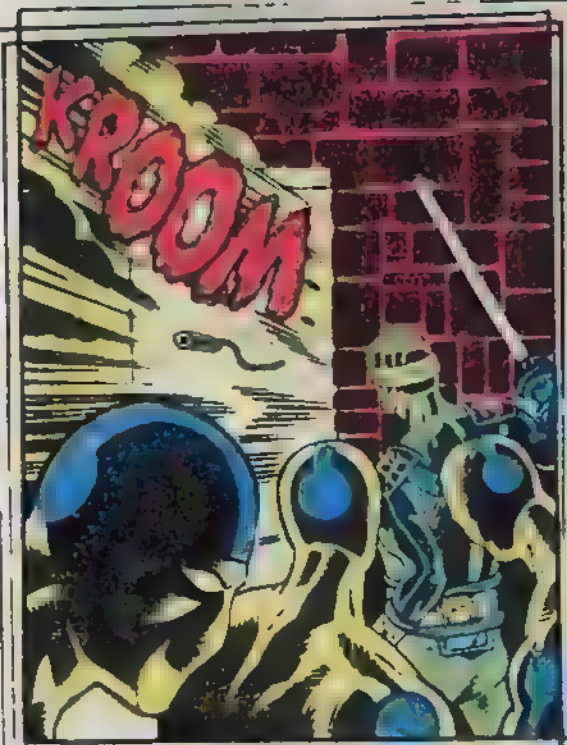


"THERE! I TOLD YOU OUR DEFENSES WERE IMPREGNABLE!"





"THE STAIRS!"





(THE TOP IS
WITHIN REACH!
JUST A FEW
MORE--)

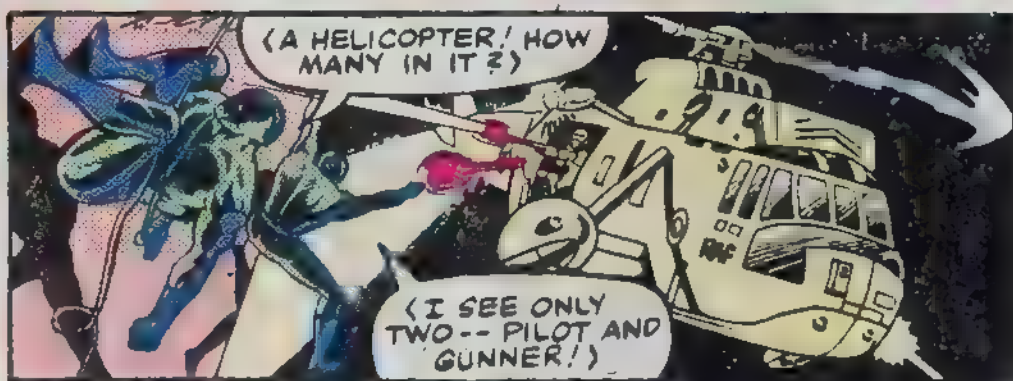


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AGHH!

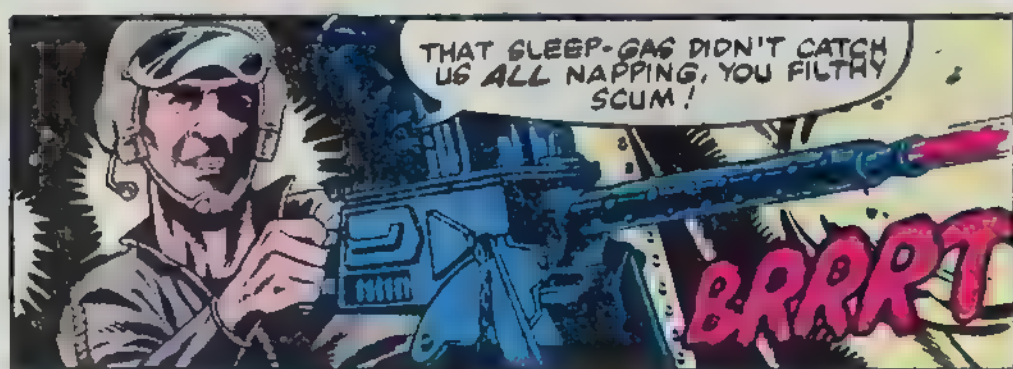


(THERE--
THOSE
LIGHTS!)



(A HELICOPTER! HOW
MANY IN IT?)

(I SEE ONLY
TWO-- PILOT AND
GUNNER!)



THAT SLEEP-GAS DIDN'T CATCH
US ALL NAPPING, YOU FILTHY
SCUM!

BRRRT

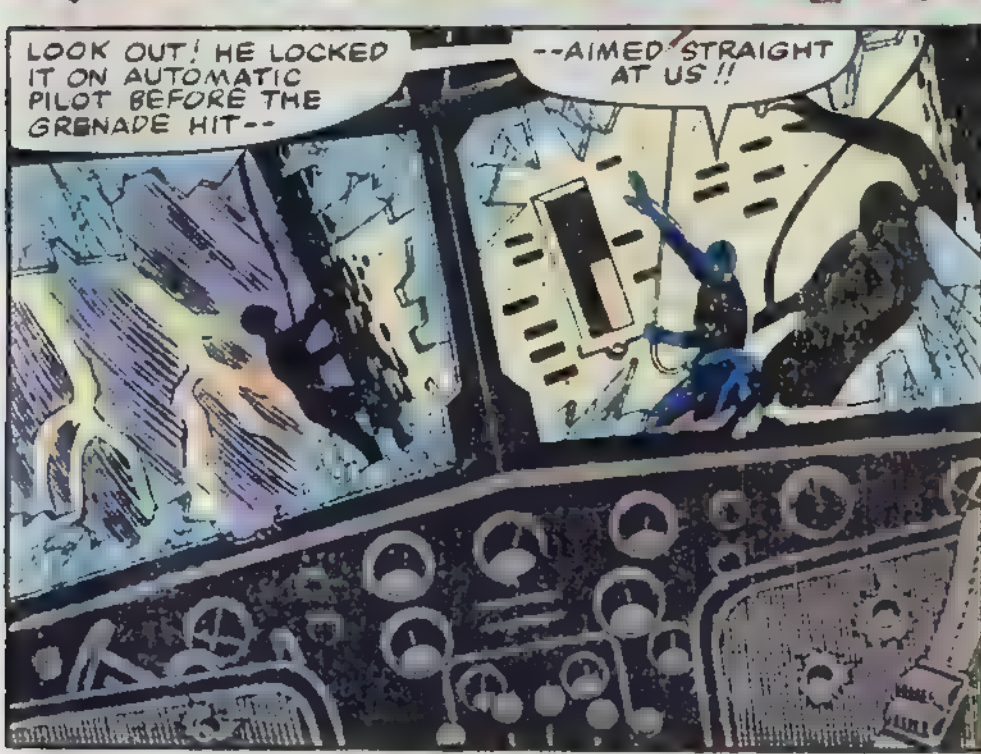
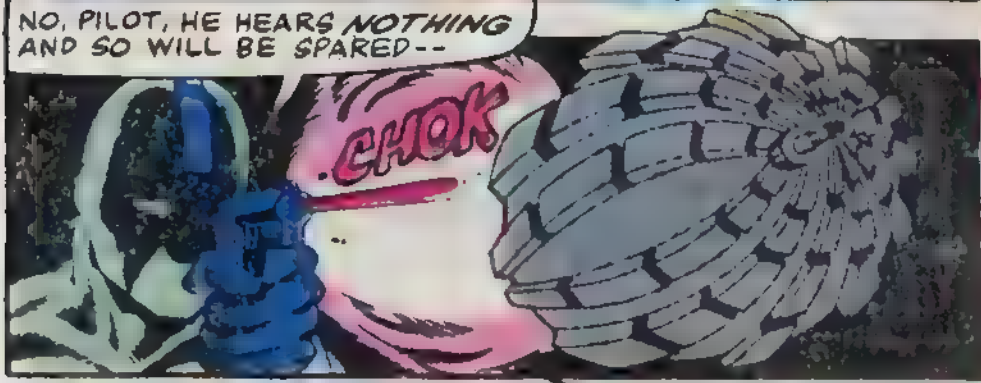
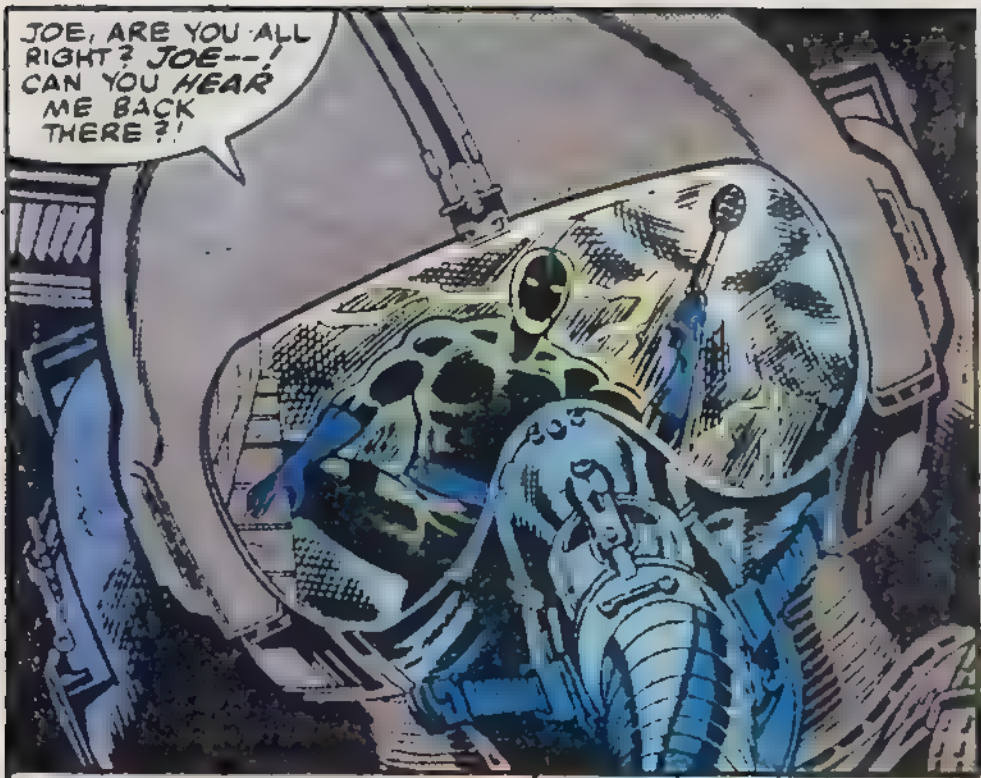


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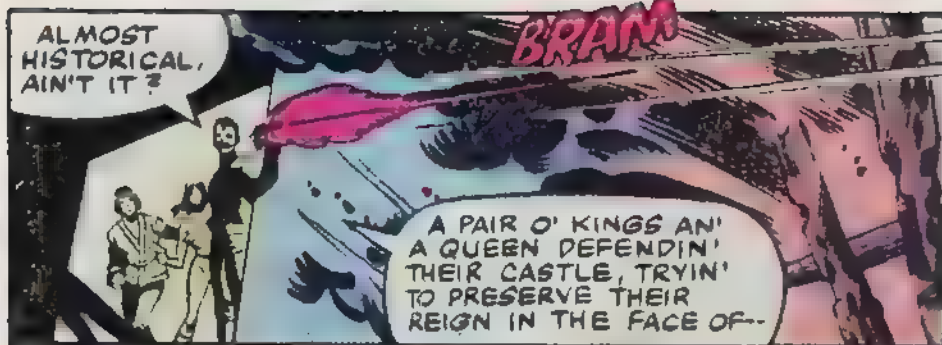
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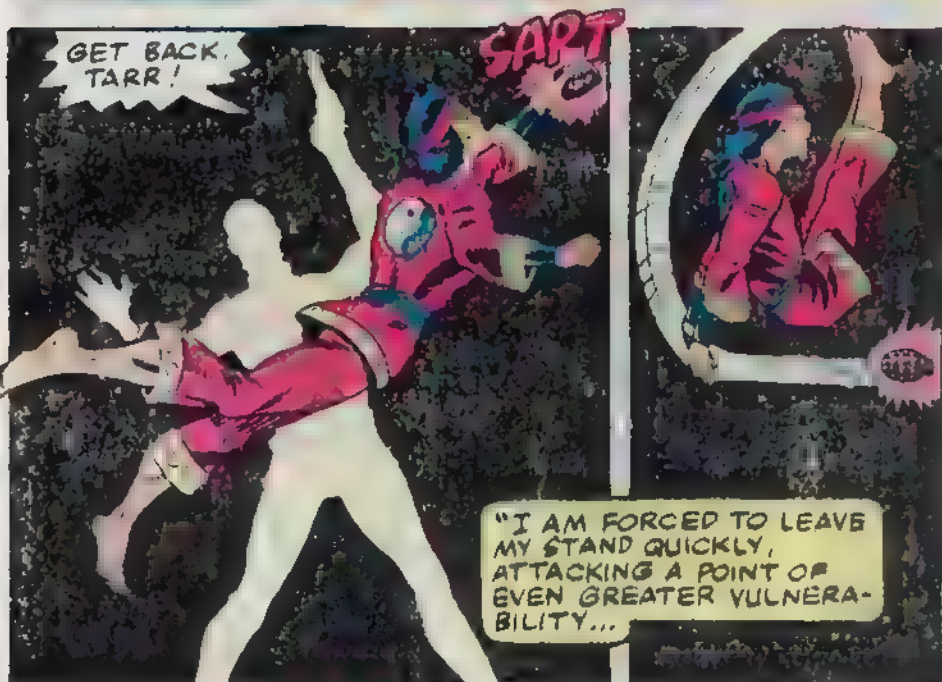


ALMOST HISTORICAL, AIN'T IT?

A PAIR O' KINGS AN' A QUEEN DEFENDIN' THEIR CASTLE, TRYIN' TO PRESERVE THEIR REIGN IN THE FACE OF--



--A GRENADE?



GET BACK, TARR!

"I AM FORCED TO LEAVE MY STAND QUICKLY, ATTACKING A POINT OF EVEN GREATER VULNERABILITY..."



YA DID IT, CHINAMAN -- THAT GRENADE WIPED OUT THE LAST FEW UP 'EM!



"NO, I HEAR HIM. PREPARING TO--"



JUMPP

I AM **GHOST MAKER**, SHANG-CHI, AND I HAVE LONGED TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE SINCE THE FIRST MOMENT I HEARD YOUR NAME.

THE KGB HAS KEPT A FILE ON YOU, WHICH HAS GROWN FASTER THAN ANY OTHER. I HAVE STUDIED THAT FILE ENDLESSLY...

... AND MARVELED AT THE MANY WAYS IN WHICH YOU HAVE TRIUMPHED OVER YOUR OPPONENTS... VELCRO, MORDILLO, CAT, WAR-YORE, SHADOW-STALKER, RAZOR-FIST, SARA -- THE LIST GOES ON -- EVEN YOUR FATHER FU MANCHU ...

AND I HAVE WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO FACE YOU MYSELF -- WHAT I WOULD DO...

I HAVE COME TO A DECISION. ALL OTHER GHOSTS ARE NOTHING IN THE FACE OF YOUR SPIRIT.

I WILL **SLAY** YOU... AND YOU WILL BECOME THE **KING** OF ALL THE GHOSTS SHAPED BY MY HANDS.



"HE IS AWESOME... AND HIS BOAST IS POSSIBLE..."

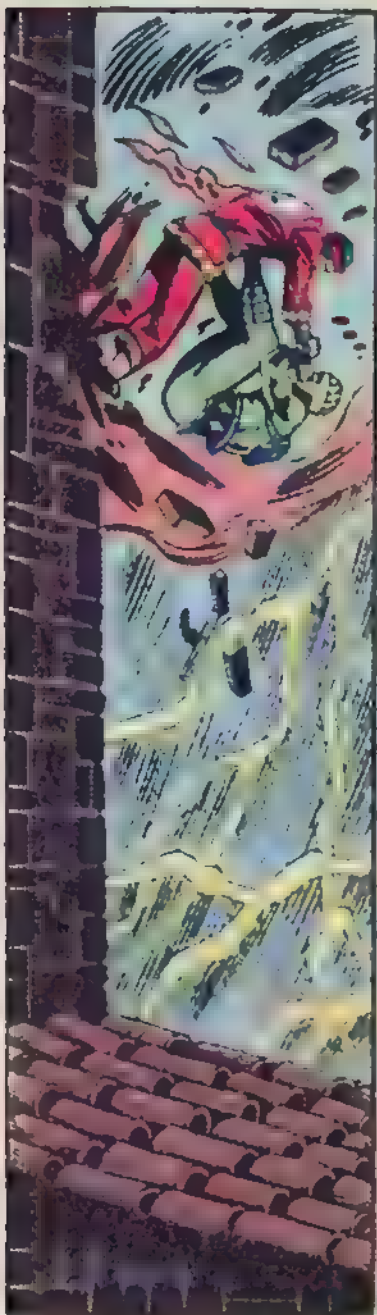
... FOR DEATH IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE...

"... BUT I HAVE
MADE MY OWN
DECISION.

"I WILL DEFEND MY SPIRIT FROM
ALL EXTERNAL INFLUENCE.



"... INCLUDING THE
HANDS OF HIM WHO
SHAPES DEATH...



"THE NIGHT IS
DARK.



"IT RAINS

... AND WOULD
CREATE A PERILOUS
REIGN OF GHOSTS.



"THE THUNDER
ROARS.

NO DOUBT DARK ANGEL
HAS INFORMED YOU OF
MY TRAINING--OF MY
FIGHTING METHOD
CALLED "NAKED KILL."
IT IS THE ABILITY TO
--CONVERT ANY OBJECT
--FROM A HAIRBRUSH
TO A PIECE OF PAPER
--INTO A LETHAL
WEAPON.

BUT ALWAYS, THE
HANDS ALONE ARE
MOST SACRED-- AND
THE MONARCH OF MY
GHOSTS DESERVES
ATTACK BY NO
LESS, NO MORE...





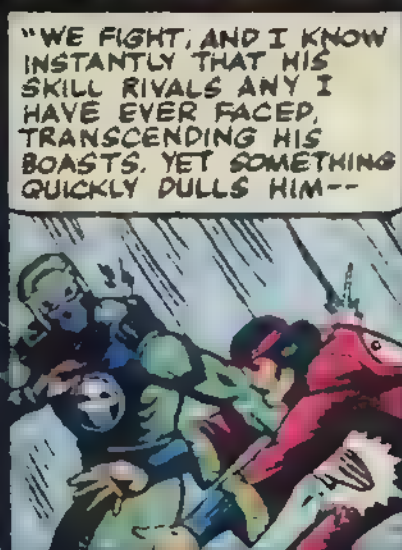
MY HANDS,
GHOST...

DO YOU
FEEL THEM
SHAPING
YOU?

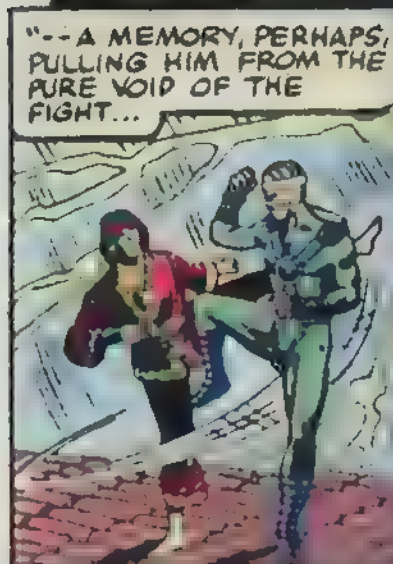


"I DO.

"AND HE MUST
FEEL *MINE*."



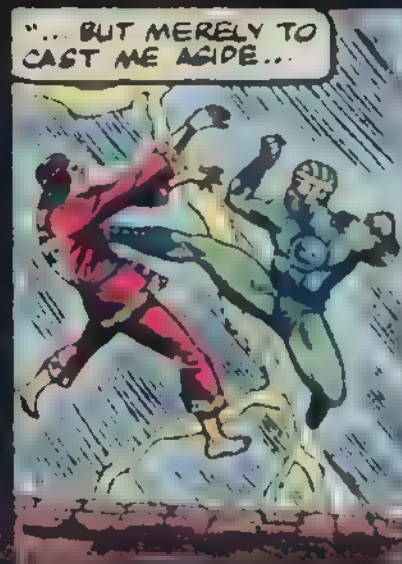
"WE FIGHT, AND I KNOW
INSTANTLY THAT HIS
SKILL RIVALS ANY I
HAVE EVER FACED,
TRANSCENDING HIS
BOASTS. YET SOMETHING
QUICKLY PULLS HIM--



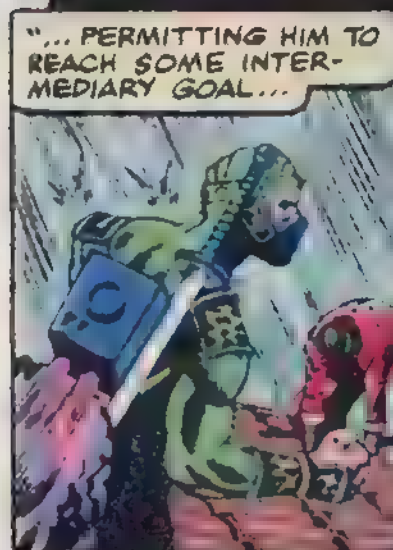
"--A MEMORY, PERHAPS,
PULLING HIM FROM THE
PURE VOID OF THE
FIGHT...



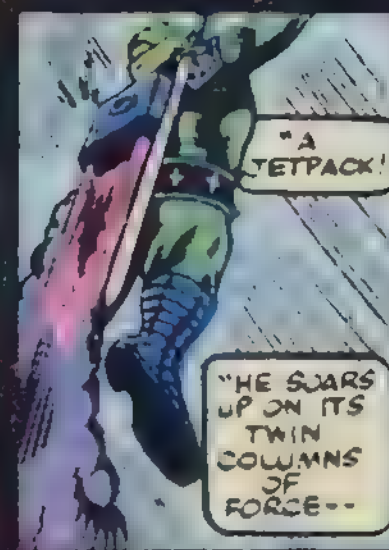
"...SO THAT HE STRIVES
NOT TO REACH THE
END...



"... BUT MERELY TO
CAST ME ASIDE..."

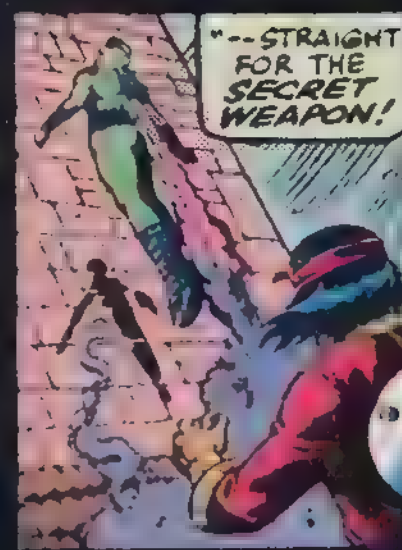


"... PERMITTING HIM TO
REACH SOME INTER-
MEDIARY GOAL..."



"A
JETPACK!"

"HE SOARS
UP ON ITS
TWIN
COLUMNS
OF
FORCE--



"--STRAIGHT
FOR THE
SECRET
WEAPON!"



"I HAVE SWORN TO
DEFEND IT, I MUST
FOLLOW



"BUT THE STONES--
HEATED BY THE FIRE
WITHIN-- BURNING MY
HANDS



"THE RAIN COOLS TOO
SLOWLY"

"I MUST ENDURE
THE PAIN, THEN,
TO DEFEND WHAT
LIES WITHIN THE
HOT STONE!"



ONLY THREE
ROUNDS LEFT
IN MY MAGNUM,
WU. HOW 'BOUT
YOU?

STILL THE BLAB-
BERMOUTH, EH?
EASE UP, SO THE
CHINAMAN
WOUNDED YER
PRIDE. SO WHAT?

OUT.

MANY'S THE TIME
HE PRACTICALLY
BUTCHERED MI--

AHH! MY LEG--

WHAT THE--?!
THE BLOODY
CLOWN'S FLYIN'--!
BUT HOW DID
HE--

THE
FLOOR--

"GHOST MAKER --GOING
STRAIGHT FOR A SAFE
WHICH MUST CONTAIN
THE WEAPON...

"...AND SO THE SAFE IS MUCH
LIKE THE STAIN IN MY MIND,
CONTAINING A DARK KNOT OF
DOUBTS AND MISTAKES...

"IS IT WORTH
DEFENDING--?"

"YES, IF ONLY TO
PREVENT ITS SECRET
FROM SPILLING OUT
TO AFFECT THE
EXTERNAL WORLD
BEYOND. BUT--

SHANG! HELP
BLACK JACK!

--WEAKENED BY
THE FIRE FROM
CHI'S GRENADE
FLIP!

WE'RE
TRAPPED UP
HERE LIKE
STEVE MCQUEEN
IN THAT "TOW-
ERIN' INFERNO"
FLICK!

AN' ME BACK'S
KILLIN' ME-- DON'T
KNOW HOW LONG I
CAN HOLD ON...
GETTIN' SLOWLY
ROASTED!

BUT GHOST MAKER--

YOU CAN'T DO BOTH! SAVE BLACK JACK--AND I'LL GO AFTER GHOST MAKER!

"LEIKO IS RIGHT-- I MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO ACTS...

"BUT SHOULD I DEFEND THE SECRET WEAPON BY STOPPING GHOST MAKER--OR DEFEND MY INNER WILL BY SAVING TARR'S LIFE... ?

"I WAS WRONG --THERE IS NO CHOICE AT ALL.

I WAS WRONG. SHANG-CHI-- IT WAS THE SHOCK OF SEEING YOU WHICH MADE ME LOSE SIGHT OF MY FIRST GOAL--

BEFORE THE KING, I MUST FIRST CREATE A QUEEN. BUT DO NOT WORRY --YOUR GHOST SHALL REIGN AT HER SIDE SOON ENOUGH. WHEN NEXT WE MEET.

"HE TURNS TO THE RUPTURE IN THE WALL, BUT EVEN AS HE ACTIVATES HIS JETPACK--

VOOOOSH

LEIKO! NOOO!

"BUT IT IS TOO LATE.

"SHE, TOO, HAS MADE HER CHOICE...

"...AND I CAN NOW DO NOTHING BUT HOPE TO SAVE TARR.

BULLPEN BULLETINS

AND NOW, THE MOMENT YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR...

As promised last month, I'm proud to present a bona fide picture of Louise Jones wearing the dreaded hat! Ta-da-a!



WEEZIE

Hi! Well, here I am, just like Jim said I'd be. That's the last time I ever admire one of his hats. Of course, it could have been worse — it could have been that silly crown he likes to wear when he's alone in his office!

To dare you're the type who never reads the credits and you don't know who I am, I add THE X-MEN, KA-ZAR, CONAN, SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN, and KUNG FU CONAN, a fact that Jim neglected to mention last month when he wrote the intro for my Cheerfully Nice News Feature. I oh! He's forgiven — the smile! Oh, and by the way, folks really do call me "Weezie" like it says under the picture.

As long as I'm writing this anyway, I guess I'll take the opportunity to clue you in on some current goings on down at my end of the Bulpen.

Guess what I get besides great art, fabulous stories and the worst case of Exhausted Editor Syndrome this side of editor Jim Salicrup's office? I get TROUBLE!

I take the X-MEN, for instance.

How, you might ask, can the good old X-Men be trouble? Actually, they're fine, but Professor Xavier is currently gathering a whole school full of lively new mutants demanding their own shot. That's trouble! Chris Claremont will write, a Bob McLeod will pencil it. But who'll ink it? When'll it be on sale? And... what'll we call it?

And KA-ZAR has a new ink — Armando Gil — and a sensational new look! With a new super-villain in #12, a new marriage in #13, and a new 32-page format every issue, where's the trouble? Right about as Deadline Time. Sigh. That's trouble! There must be an understatement saying that such wonderful work can only be completed at 5:00 P.M. on Deadline Day!

Oh, well, the only way to cope with it all is to keep thinking cheerful thoughts!

Say, remember last month's announcement about Production Manager Ron Zalma's impending baby? Well, it's an 8 lb., 10 oz. girl named Jessica Uni! That's cheerful!

ME AGAIN...

How the heck did she find out about my crown? Oh, well. Speaking of feeling like a king, I sure felt that way a week or so ago when I returned to my office after a lengthy meeting with Fearless President Jim Galton and Fearless Publishing Veeep Mike Hobson (we discussed our upcoming move to larger quarters) to find a surprise party in honor of my birthday! And what a party! There was a Birthday Cake, naturally, plus food and drink to suit every taste, music, noise and laughter. Would you believe balloons and crêpe paper streamers? In the midst of it all, a happy birthday telegram arrived from the Bulpen Crew — and got this, it was delivered by a beautiful young lady clad in naught but an itty-bitsy bikini. They call it a Strip-o-Gram, I think. Very, um, dramatic. Not only that, the crew presented me with no less than three huge, handmade birthday cards covered with kind words, clever cartoons and signatures. Also (and I'm still in shock over this!) they gave me a truly incredible electronic Seiko watch with an alarm, stopwatch timer, dual timer, calendar and, oh, yeah, it tells time, too. And it probably will walk the dog if you ask it. I've never owned a really fine watch before. I couldn't be more pleased — but, more, I'm just happy to be working with such wonderful, beautiful people. Some of them, especially the freelance creative folks, you know from the credits, but most of the staff people do

their work behind the scenes. Who are these folks? I'm so glad you asked.

The Marvel Comics Staff

Jim Albano, Art Production
Paul Brown, Photostat Operator
Robbie Carosella, Photostat Operator
Denny Cress, Art Production Supervisor
Tom DeFalco, Editor
Denny Fingeroth, Asst. Editor
Alyce Gordon, Secretary
Linda Grant, Secretary
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Jim Salicrup, Editor
Harry Shapiro, Designer
Marian Samberg, Typographer
John Tarbaghone, Artist
Lance Tunks, Asst. Editor
Andy Vachus, Colorist
Ron Zalma, Asst. Art Production Supervisor

There are many more folks on staff here at Marvel of course — the EPIC crew, the Special Projects folks, the Foreign Licensing crew, the Mailroom gang, and still more, sadly way too many to list here, now. To all of you who made my 30th the happiest of my life, my deepest, sincerest thanks. You're the best!

BACK TO WORK!

A question I'm asked frequently these days is "are Marvel and DC going to do any more crossovers?" By now you've seen the SUPERMAN SPIDER-MAN TREASURY EDITION and the HULK BATMAN TREASURY EDITION which went on sale last May and October, respectively. Coming up next year we have two more — X-MEN/TEEN TITANS SUPERSPECIAL and the AVENGERS/JLA SUPERSPECIAL. Dates will be announced as soon as we figure them out.

And now, for something completely different...

ARCHIE GOODWIN'S EPIC NEWSLINE!

According to our dictionary, *sympathy* is the gift of making valuable or agreeable things not sought for. It is a word that comes up very often in the production of EPIC ILLUSTRATED. The valuable and agreeable in our particular visual odyssey is generously achieved through much seeking and searching, copping and coddling and occasional threads of bodily harm or intense psychic damage. However, the big feature we're pounding the promotional drums for in EPIC #10 is so extraordinary indeed: *Merade the She-Wolf* was created by X-MEN scribe Chris Claremont and John Bolton, the talented British artist whose *King Kull* dazzled everyone in *BIZARRE ADVENTURES* #26 and was designed to be yet another issue-length project for that mag. With everything completed on *Merade* but the lettering a scheduling shift left the feature without a home in *BIZARRE ADVENTURES* or anywhere else for the near future. Not one to let what he considers among his best work to languish, Chris approached us about running *Merade* in EPIC. Second only to John had even done a cover of their female warrior who pit, perched against victory during the fading days of the Roman Empire. Since EPIC readers have been supping on a Bolton cover ever since his first collaboration, The Valkyrie, appeared in issue #7, how could we turn it down? When serendipity finally does strike, we go with it all the way.

Archie Goodwin

AND AS THE SUN SINKS IN THE WEST...

Whoops! Out of space already. Oh, well. I'll be back in thirty. Until then, keep a warm smile, and stick with us. We're just now getting the hang of this business.

Shoote

THE HYPE BOX

FANTASTIC FOUR ROAST #1 — In celebration of the F.F.'s 10th anniversary, writer JIM THRELL and publisher FRED NEMBECK have crisscrossed the planet in both time and space, just across every street in Marvel has had a shot at discussing the club as well. They're more detailed with the FF are guests of honor at a four-starred banquet where they are honored by these fellow Marvel stars.

GIANT SILVER SURFER #1 — STAN THE MAN himself returns to script the 48-page, no-plot, no-idea issue which was plotted and penciled by a whole lot of artists and colored by TOM PALMER. The Surfer in his briefs is the only one to return to Earth!

MARVEL FANFARE #1 — Corner the only you always dreamed they'd be presented — with no ads, no word clouds, no black high-quality paper. The premiere issue of the publishing world's most beautiful issue of *Spider-Man* and the *Angel* is a 20-page magazine with art by CHRIS CLAREMONT with pencils and inks by MARC HALL. OUCH! It's hot and it's on the cover!

EPIC ILLUSTRATED #10 — JOHN BOLTON is back — teamed up with CHRIS CLAREMONT — to present the debut of *Merade the She-Wolf*. Plus: *Wendell* by DICK MCKENNA, *John Bull's* by MARC SEVERIN, and *THE VIKING* and much more.

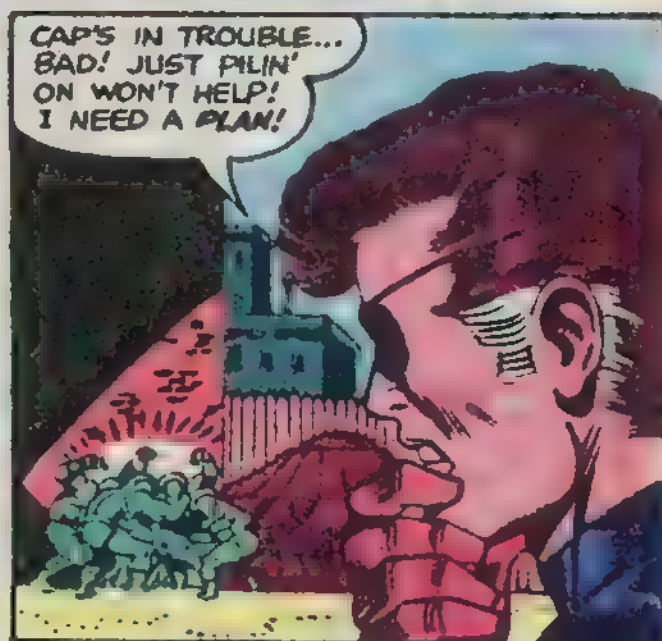
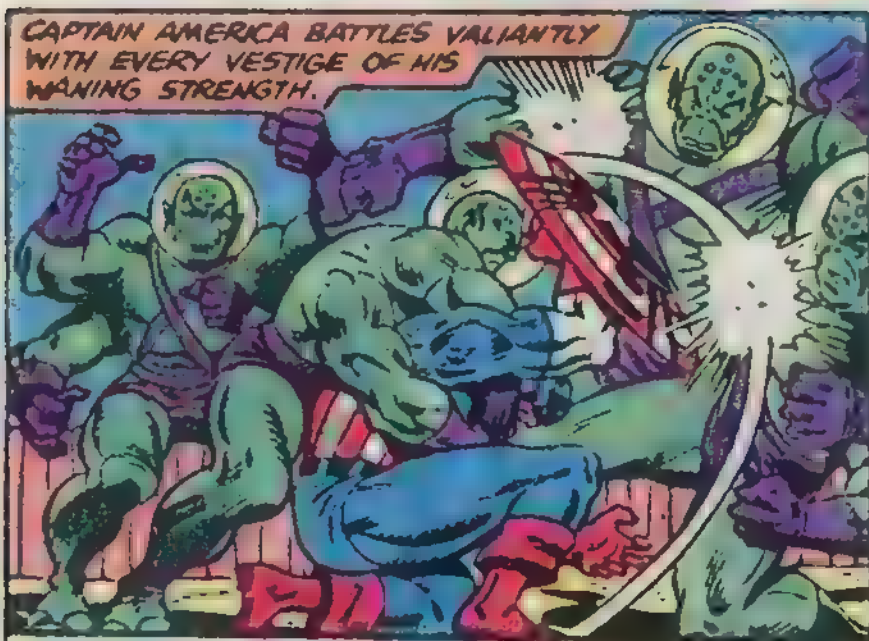
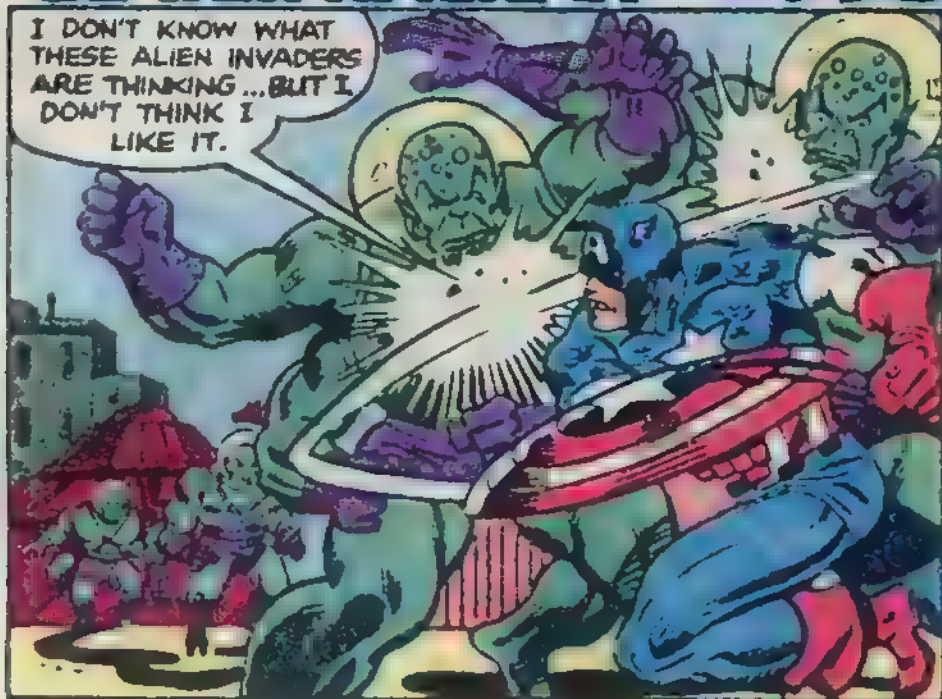
THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

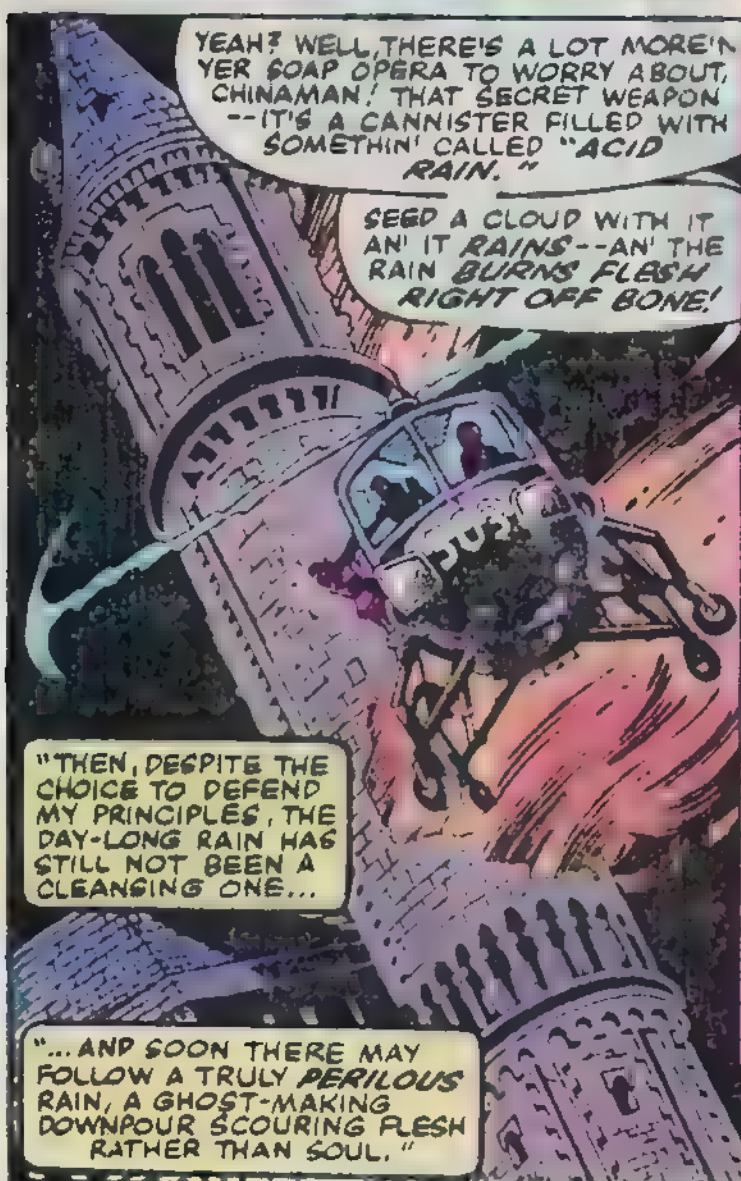
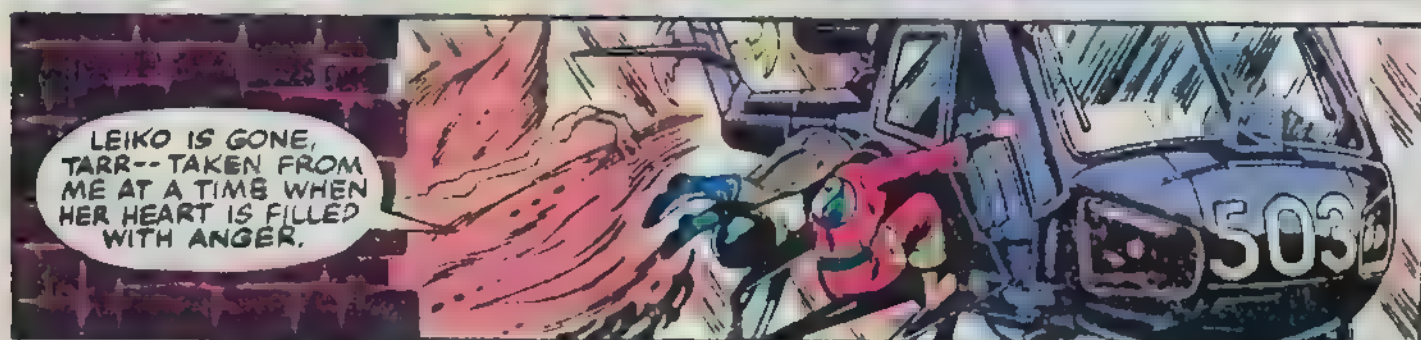
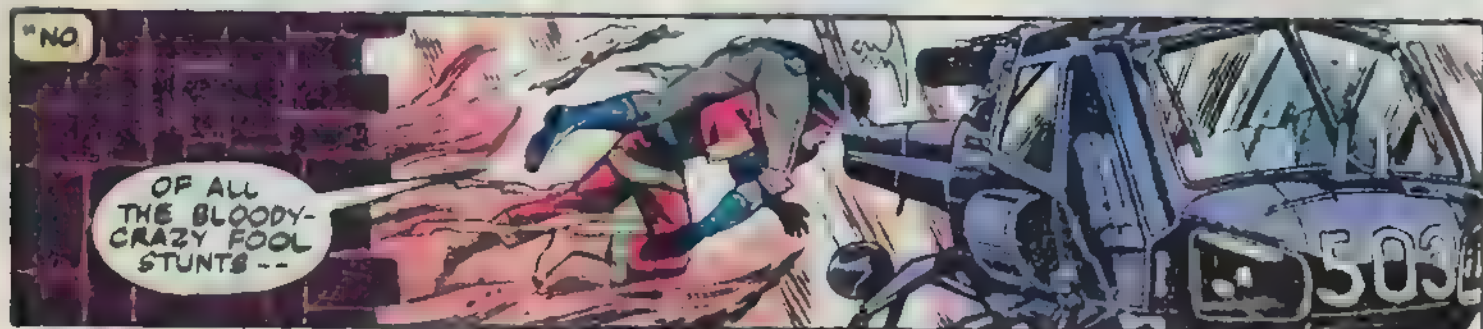
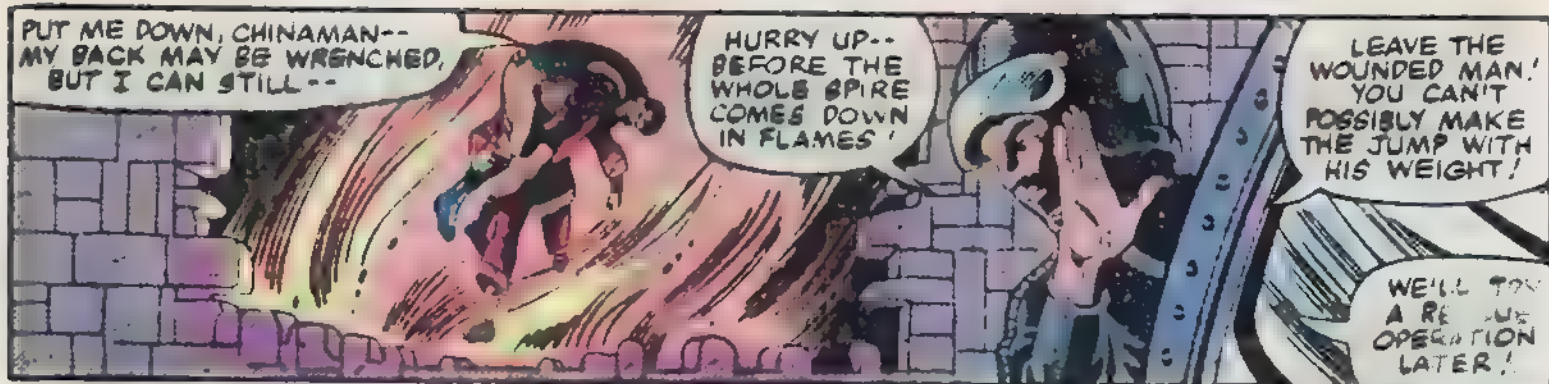
- ☐ KA-ZAR #12 — Written by BRUCE JONES. Pencils by BRENT ANDERSON. Finishes by ARMANDO GIL.
- ☐ MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #88 — The Thing, Giant Man, and Spider-Woman!
- ☐ GIANT SILVER SURFER #1 — The Surfer's back in an all new tale by STAN LEE, JOHN BYRNE, and TOM PALMER.
- ☐ DAZZLER #13
- ☐ KING CONAN #9
- ☐ SPIDEY SUPER STORIES #57 — Gate last issue!
- ☐ DAREDEVIL #180
- ☐ DENNIS THE MENACE #4
- ☐ MICRONAUTS #39
- ☐ GHOST RIDER #85
- ☐ MOON KNIGHT #17
- ☐ THOR #317
- ☐ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #226
- ☐ CAPTAIN AMERICA #287
- ☐ INCREDIBLE HULK #288
- ☐ AVENGERS #217
- ☐ CONAN #132
- ☐ MARVEL TALES #137 — Reprinting the origin and first appearance of *Spider-Man* by STAN LEE & STEVE DITKO from *Amazing Fantasy* #15!
- ☐ X-MEN #155
- ☐ POWER MAN/IRON FIST #71
- ☐ ROM #28
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR #240
- ☐ MARVEL TEAM-UP #115 — *Spider-Man* and the *Valkyrie* — together!
- ☐ IRON MAN #155
- ☐ PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #84
- ☐ DEFENDERS #106
- ☐ STAR WARS #57
- ☐ MASTER OF KUNG FU #110
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR ROAST #1 — Written and laid out by FRED NEMBECK. Art by — everybody!

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ CRAZY #83 — *Raiders of the Lost Arch: Teen Hulk*; RALPH REESE's *ABC Demies*; *Obnoxio*; *Kinetio Kids*; and lots more!
- ☐ SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #73
- ☐ MARVEL FANFARE #1 — The latest innovation from the House of Ideas (see Hype Box above for important details).
- ☐ EPIC ILLUSTRATED #10 — The Visual Odyssey continues with contributions by CHRIS CLAREMONT, JOHN BOLTON, JOHN BUSCEMA, MARIE SEVERIN, and more (see Hype Box).

CAPTAIN AMERICA™ "THE DECIDING FACTOR!"





NEXT: DEADLY RAIN!

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

DENNIS O'NEIL
EDITOR
RALPH MACCHIO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Gene Day! Gene Day! Gene Day!

The purpose of this letter is to say (surprise) that I like Gene Day's work on MOKF. So why am I doing this? After all, I'm not usually the type to pen rave letters, bereft of at least *some* substance and critical content.

Well, let me explain. I've heard rumbles to the effect that MOKF is in trouble on the artistic front. Day is the fourth major MOKF artist, it's been said, following Starlin, Gulacy, and Zeck. And in this procession, it's been said, each is inferior to his predecessor. I disagree. Furthermore, I really like Day's work, especially his panel layouts. And you've indicated that you agree. And I think he's only getting better. Finally, I just wanted to add my voice to the chorus of cheers and squash any dump-Day movement right here and now.

Gene Day! Gene Day! Gene Day!

P.S. In my next letter I promise to at least mention Doug Moench, and to criticize something/anything.

T.M. Maple
Toronto, Canada

What "dump-Day movement" —?! Are ye mad, Maple? In the hundreds of letters we've received since Gene assumed MOKF's visual destiny, we can't recall a single instance of disapprobation. Contrarily, Day (and night) support has been somewhere on the order of unanimous and rabid. Witness the very next missive...

Dear Doug, Gene, and Armando:

MOKF #107 is fantastic, one of the best comicbooks of all time. Armando's inking is perfect on Gene's wonderful pencils & and two of them make for one of the greatest teams ever united — right up there with Gulacy & Adkins, Smith & Adkins, Adams & Palmer, and Bryne & Austin. Gene's pencils improve with every issue and they were great to begin with. He and Armando deserve a raise for all the detail and intricacy they put into their work.

Most books on the stands are just comicbooks that tell a plain and dull story; but MOKF tells a tale with real gusto, grabbing one's interest with thoughtful, gripping narrative and ingenious, flashy layouts. It makes for something special and half the fun is in going back over the story just to savor the artwork again. The work and enthusiasm poured into these pages really shows — and Gene's splash pages are so good they could easily be covers.

Larry

(no other name or address given)

Ya see Maple?! Listen to Larry — and the legions like him! Now, having just printed this paean of praise to Armando Gil's brief but beautiful stint on the inking, we'd like to point out that Jocular Jack Abel is now in charge of all the wet black stuff. And before you send us your comments, here are ours: People are even more like apples & oranges than apples & oranges are. So, while we'd be loathe to posit Jack being better than Armando or Armando being better than Jack, we think they're both just as good in slightly different ways.

Dear Doug,

I wanted my first letter to MOKF to be a positive one, however... I was reading issue #106, thoroughly enjoying usual, when I was suddenly jarred by the words "...surrounded by lifeless assassins." I understand why they killed the assassins; surrounded

and outnumbered as they were, Shang and Leiko hardly had time to use gentler methods. What I don't understand is the killing being coupled with this great "need" they evidenced.

Shang-Chi has always seemed to be one of the most pacifist characters in comics; never eager to seek out violence like many other heroes. In WHAT IF #16 you have Shang say, "The sanctity of life is greater than any man who lives..." Now, however, you seem to be tying this "need" to Shang's "loss of art." The key word concerning his "lost art" seems to be serenity. This is what I don't understand: Shang and Leiko "needed" to kill to regain some semblance of serenity? The sanctity of life is greater than any man who lives, but is not greater than a man's need to regain a lost art? Please explain.

On the plus side, the art and the rest of the writing has been great. Thank you for much enjoyment and food for thought.

Kerry Sims
P.O. Box 3600, Hillside House
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

The "need" Shang-Chi and Leiko sought to fulfill was merely a need to "air themselves out," to get out in the field and do something, to conquer doubts and staleness, to prove themselves still capable of dealing with danger, both individually and as an effective team.

It most certainly did *not* refer to any desire to kill.

The problem arises from Doug's choice of adjective. "Lifeless" in this case was not employed literally; the defeated enemies were simply showing no evidence of life, or of further threat. For all we know, they were merely wounded and/or unconscious.

Dear Folks,

Thank you once again for another simply excellent story. Right now I judge MOKF the best comic offered by Marvel, bar none, which of course places it leagues beyond anything published by your Distinguished Competition.

The only improvement I can imagine would be increased use of Black Jack, Clive, and Nayland Smith. Other than that, never stop what you're doing.

Marc Nemo
136 E 3rd St
Mt Carmel, PA 17851

Never is quite a while, Marc, but we'll try. And guess what? You'll be seeing lots more of all the folks you requested in upcoming stories. No one dotes on Tarr, Reston, Smith, and Leiko more than Doug & Gene.

Oops. Having said that, however, we must indulge your patience one issue longer. For, while next issue does in fact feature the lagniappe of a few poignant Tarr/Leiko interactions, the story is another "offbeat" one, focusing almost totally on Shang-Chi and Ghost Maker — and sporting the damndest non-stop series of chases and fights you're ever likely to see in comics, or in films either, for that matter. It's called "Deadly Rain" and it hits the stands in 30 days, give or take a sunset or two. See you then?

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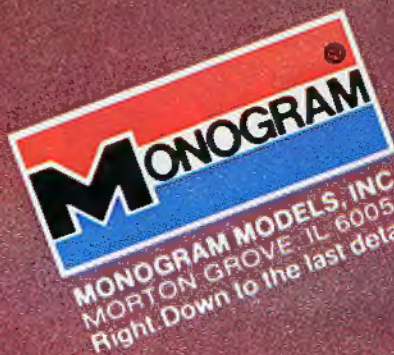
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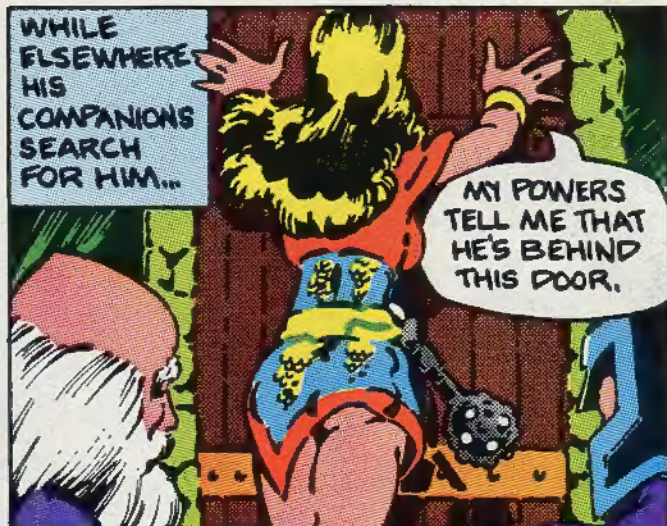


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